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الجامعة الإسلامية في المدينة المنورة

SÎRAT AL-NABÎ ﷺ AND THE ORIENTALISTS

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE WRITINGS OF
WILLIAM MUIR, D. S. MARGOLIOUTH AND
W. MONTGOMERY WATT

Vol. I B
From the early phase of the Prophet's
Mission to his migration to Madinah

BY

MUHAMMAD MOHAR ALI
Ph.D. (London), Barrister-at-Law
PROFESSOR OF THE HISTORY OF ISLAM
CENTRE FOR THE SERVICE OF *SUNNAH* AND *SÎRAH*
ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY, MADINAH

**KING FAHD COMPLEX
FOR THE PRINTING OF THE HOLY QUR'AN
MADINAH**

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على رسوله سيدنا ونبينا محمد وآله أجمعين وبعد .

PREFACE

The scope and purpose of the work have been explained in the preface to its Vol. I A which covers the subject from the background to the beginning of the Prophet's mission. The present volume is in continuation of that volume. As such the pagination as well as the numbering of the sections and chapters have been kept continuous in the present volume. It contains sections V to VII embracing chapters XXI to XXXIX and carries on the narrative since the early phase of the Prophet's mission till his migration to Madina. As in Vol. I A, in this volume too, the main events and developments relating to each section have been described first in one or more chapters, followed by an analysis and examination of the views and suggestions of the orientalists on them. Likewise attempts have been made to summarise the orientalists' arguments and reasons as faithfully as possible and to meet them on their own grounds.

* * *

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The Prophet's Mosque, M. M. Ali

19 Dhû al-Qa'dah, 1413 H.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Al-Azraqî	'Abû al-Walîd Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Aḥmad al-Azraqî, *Akhbâr Makka wa mâ jâ'a fîhâ min al-'Âthâr*, ed. Rushdî al-Ṣâliḥ Mulḥis, Beirut, 1399 / 1979.
Al-Fâsî	'Abû Ṭayyib Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad, al-Taqî, al-Fâsî, *Al-'Iqd al-Thamîn Fî Târîkh al-Balad al-'Amîn,* 8 Vols., Cairo, 1379-1388 H.
B.S.O.A.S.	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, London.
Bukhârî	'Abu 'Abd Allâh Muḥammad ibn Ismâ'îl al-Bukhârî, *Ṣaḥîḥ al-Bukhârî* (The number refers to the number of *ḥadîth* in *Fatḥ al-Bârî*).
Ibn Hishâm	'Abû Muḥammad 'Abd al-Malik ibn Hishâm, *al-Sîrah al-Nabawiyyah* ed. Muḥammad al-Saqqâ and others, 2 Vols., second print, Cairo, 1375 / 1955.
Ibn Sa'd	Muḥammad ibn Sa'd ibn Manî', 'Abû 'Abd Allâh, *Al-Ṭabaqât al-Kubrâ*, 8 Vols., Beirut, 1405 / 1985.
J.R.A.S.	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, London.
M.W.	*The Moslem World*, Hartford Seminary Foundation, Connecticut, U.S.A.
Muslim	'Abû al-Ḥasan Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjâj, al-Qushayrî, al-Naysabûrî, *Ṣaḥîḥ Muslim*, (The number refers to the number of *ḥadîth* in the edition by Fu'âd A. Bâqî, 5 Vols., Istanbul, n.d.)
Musnad	'Abû 'Abd Allâh Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal ibn Muḥammad, *Musnad al-Imâm Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal wa bihâmishihi Muntakhab Kanz al-'Ummâl*, 6 Vols, old print, n.d.
Suhaylî	'Abû al-Qâsim 'Abd al-Raḥmân ibn 'Abd Allâh ibn 'Abî al-Ḥasan al-Khath'amî, *Al-Rawḍ al-'Unuf Fî Tafsîr al-Sîrah al-Nabawiyyah li ibn Hishâm,* ed. Ṭa-Hâ 'Abd al-Ra'ûf Sa'îd, 4 vols, Beirut, 1398.

T.G.U.O.S	*Transactions of the Glasgow University Oriental Society*, Glasgow.
Ṭayâlisî	Sulaymân ibn Dâud ibn al-Jârûd 'Abî Dâud, *Musnad 'Abî Dâud al-Ṭayâlisî*, Beirut, n.d.
Tirmidhî	'Abû 'Îsâ Muḥammad ibn 'Isâ ibn Sawrah, *Al-Jâmi' al-Ṣaḥîḥ wa huwa Sunan al-Tirmidhî,* ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shâkir, 4 vols., Cairo, second print, 1398 / 1987.
Watt, *M. at M.*	W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1988.
Watt, *M.'s M.*	W. Montgomery Watt, *Muḥammad's Mecca*, Edinburgh, 1988.

SECTION V
THE EARLY PHASE OF THE MISSION

CHAPTER XXI

THE EARLY PHASE OF THE MISSION

I. THE INITIAL PERIOD

The *fatrah* or pause in the coming of *waḥy*, as mentioned earlier, was an affair in the initial stage of the Prophet's commission and it lasted for a few weeks at the most.[1] It was ended, according to most of the reports, by the revelation of the first few *'âyahs* of *sûrat al-Muddaththir* which marked the beginning of *risâlah* or commission to preach.[2] The second *'âyah* of this *sûrah* was a direct command to the Prophet to "get up and warn", i.e., warn his people against the consequences of their wrong beliefs and practices. The third *'âyah* specifies the main theme of his preaching — وربك فكبر— "And your Lord, proclaim His Supremacy". It meant that he was to declare that "Allah is the Greatest" (الله أكبر), to denounce *shirk* or polytheism in all its varieties and to proclaim the unity and supremacy of Allah over all other imaginary deities. The directive to "warn" thus meant warning the people against the consequences of their polytheism.

Understandably, the messenger of Allah at first approached those persons in whom he could repose his confidence and from whom he could hope for favourable response or at least sympathetic hearing. Ibn Isḥâq informs us that for the first three years the Messenger of Allah carried on the work of preaching "secretly". At the end of that period Allah commanded him to preach openly what he had received from Him. This new directive was contained in passages 15:94 and 26:214 revealed at that time.[3] The two passages run as follows:

(a) 15:94 - ﴿فاصدع بما تؤمر وأعرض عن المشركين﴾ (١٥ : ٩٤)

"Therefore expound openly (or distinctly) what you are commanded; and pay no heed to (or turn away from) the polytheists".

1. See *supra*, p. 390. See also Muḥammad 'Abû Shahbah, *Al-Sîrat al-Nabawiyyah* etc., Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p.264 and Muḥammad 'Izzat Darwazah, *Sîrat al-Rasûl*, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p.138.

2. Ibn Isḥâq's statement (Ibn Hishâm, I., p.241) that *sûrat al-Ḍuḥâ* (96) was revealed after the *fatrah* is not acceptable in view of the report in *Bukhârî* (no. 4950) about the occasion for revelation of that *sûrah*. None of the scholars of the Qur'ânic sciences (*'ulûm al-Qur'ân*), though they classify the *sûrah* as an early one, regards this to be the one that was revealed after the *fatrah*. See Al-Suyûṭî, *Al-Itqân* etc., p. 10.

3. Ibn Hishâm, I., p.262.

(b) 26:214 - ﴿وأنذر عشيرتك الأقربين﴾ (٢٦ : ٢١٤)
"And warn thy nearest kinsmen".

Following Ibn Isḥâq Al-Ṭabarî also states that for the first three years the work of preaching was carried on secretly.[1] Subsequent writers have only followed their suit and have taken the statement as it is.

This statement about what is called the period of secret preaching, however, has to be taken with caution; for the facts related by both Ibn Isḥâq and Al-Ṭabarî themselves on one hand, and those gleaned from the Qur'ân, on the other, do not quite warrant the assumption of a period of secret preaching as such. In fact Ibn Isḥâq does not base his statement on any specific authority or *sanad* but on the general assertion — *fi-mâ balaghanî* — (فيما بلغني), i.e., "as I have come to know". More important than this, he rightly reckons 'Abû Bakr as one of the three earliest converts, after Khadîjah (r.a.), and states: "When 'Abû Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, embraced Islam, he made known his acceptance of Islam and called people towards Allah and His Messenger".[2] Ibn Isḥâq actually mentions the names of five persons belonging to different clans who embraced Islam at 'Abû Bakr's instance.[3] It is after having said all this that Ibn Isḥâq makes the above mentioned statement about the period of secret preaching. Neither from his account nor from the other sources do we get the impression that 'Abû Bakr's and the others' conversion to Islam took place after the initial period of three years. Hence what Ibn Isḥâq means by the initial period of secret preaching was obviously a period of private preaching — of personal contacts and approach to individuals in contradistinction to preaching to gatherings and assemblages of peoples at markets, fairs and such other public places.

Secondly, speaking about the same subject of the early converts to Islam Al-Ṭabarî gives two versions of a report by 'Afîf (al-Kindî, of Yaman) who says that once, before he had embraced Islam, he came to Minâ during the *ḥajj* days and there met his friend 'Abbâs ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, uncle of the Prophet. There 'Afif saw a good-looking young man, accompanied by a lady and a boy, performing *ṣalât* (prayer) turning towards the Ka'ba. 'Afîf enquired about them and their peculiar religion and was told by 'Abbâs that

1. Al-Ṭabarî, *Târîkh*, I,1169.
2. Ibn Hishâm, I,249. The text runs as follows:
(قال ابن إسحاق فلما أسلم أبو بكر رضي الله عنه ، أظهر إسلامه ودعا إلى الله ورسوله)
3. Ibid., pp.250-262. See also *infra*, pp.520-521.

the young man was his nephew, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allah (ﷺ), the lady, Khadîjah (r.a.), his wife, and the boy, another nephew, 'Alî ibn 'Abî Ṭâlib (r.a.), adding that the first mentioned person claimed to have been chosen as Allah's Messenger and the other two believed in him and followed his new religion. Later on 'Afîf used to remark regretfully that had he then embraced Islam he could have been the fourth convert.[1] It is evident from this report that the fact of the Messenger of Allah's commission as such, and of his mission and activities, was no secret and unknown affair to his people and that he even used to perform prayer in the new manner sometimes within the sight of people, such as at Minâ during *ḥajj* days.

The same picture emerges from the accounts of the conversion of 'Abû Bakr and Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubayd Allah ibn 'Uthmân al-Taymî, (r.a.). It is reported that 'Abû Bakr came to know about the Prophethood of Muḥammad (ﷺ) from a maid servant of Ḥakîm ibn Ḥizâm with whom he was sitting at the time and that immediately on getting this information he hurried to the Prophet and, after only ascertaining the truth of the information, embraced Islam without any hesitation or further questioning.[2] About Ṭalḥah it is reported that on his return from Bosra, where he had gone for trading and where he heard about the appearance of a Prophet at Makka, ascertained from the people of the town that "Muḥammad al-Amîn" (ﷺ) had been commissioned as a Prophet and that 'Abû Bakr had embraced Islam. Thereupon Ṭalḥah went to the latter and with him to the Prophet and became a Muslim.[3] It is further related that the conversion of 'Abû Bakr and Ṭalḥah, both of Banû Taym, so much angered Nawfal ibn Khuwaylid ibn Asad (of Banû Asad), who was known as the "Lion of Quraysh", that he tied them both together with one rope as punishment for their having gone over to the new faith and that their own clan, Banû Taym, did not dare come to their rescue. For this incident 'Abû Bakr and Ṭalḥah came to be known as "the two comrades" (*al-Qarînân*).[4] This fact shows that the affair of the Prophet and the conversion of such important members of the Makkan society as 'Abû Bakr and Ṭalḥah were the "talk of the town", so to say, and that the Makkan lea-

1. Al-Ṭabarî, *Târikh*, I,1160-1163. See also '*Usud al-Ghâbah*, no. 3696 and *Istî'âb*, III, 1241-1243 (no.2036).

2. Zurqânî, *Sharḥ Mawâhib etc.*, cited in Maudûdî, *op. cit.*, II, 145.

3. *Al-'Iṣâbah*, no.4266 (Vol. II, p.229).

4. Ibn Kathîr, *Al-Bidâyah etc.*, VII, p. 247; Ibn Hishâm, I, p. 282.

ders' concern for the new movement and their opposition to it manifested themselves right from the beginning.

The facts illustrated by the above mentioned reports are strongly corroborated by the Qur'ân. Thus the first few *'âyahs* of *sûrat al-Qalam* (68), about the early revelation of which there is no difference of opinion,[1] state:

﴿ما أنت بنعمة ربك بمجنون * وإن لك لأجرا غير ممنون * وإنك لعلىٰ خلق عظيم * فستبصر ويبصرون * بأييّكمُ المَفتُون * إن ربّك هو أعلم بمن ضل عن سبيله وهو أعلم بالمهتدين﴾

"You are not, by the grace of your Lord, mad (or possessed). Indeed, for you is an unfailing reward; and you certainly are on an exalted standard of character. Soon you will see, and they too will see, which of you has gone off his head. Verily it is your Lord Who knows best who has strayed from His path; and it is He Who knows best who are on the path of guidance". (68:2-7)

It is clear from this passage that the Prophet had already started calling the people to the truth and that the initial reaction of the unbelievers was the accusation that he had gone off his head and that he had strayed from the right track.[2] The passage reassures the Prophet about the sublimity of his character and about the correctness of his work and conduct.

The same facts are revealed also by *'âyahs* 9-10 of *sûrat al-'Alaq* (96) which, though revealed separately from its first few *'âyahs*, were not much later than they. These two *'âyahs* refer to a prominent Makkan unbeliever ('Abû Jahl) "who forbids a servant of Allah (i.e. the Prophet) when he prays". Incidentally, this fact of the Prophet's praying within the sight of others at a very early stage of his career is very much in tune with 'Afîf al-Kindî's report mentioned above. Even the Passage 15:94, which Ibn Isḥâq cites as containing a directive to preach openly presupposes that the Messenger of Allah's work and mission had already been known to the people and that it had elicited the unbelievers' ridicule; for the immediately succedding *'âyah* (15:95) assures him: "Verily We suffice you against those who ridicule you". ﴿إنّا كفينـٰـك المستهزءين﴾. It may be observed that ridicule and accusation of going mad are the types of reaction that were naturally elicited in the first instance.

There are of course the well-known reports that the Prophet beseeched Allah to strengthen Islam by the conversion of either 'Abû Jahl or 'Umar ibn

1 In fact it is universally regarded as second in the order of revelation.

2. See *infra.*, pp. 620-621.

al-Khaṭṭâb,[1] that Ibn Mas'ûd stated that the Muslims were weak previously to 'Umar's conversion and became strengthened by his conversion[2] and that the latter himself, after his conversion, remarked that if they were in the right, why then should they hide their activities.[3] These reports are of course correct; but none of them really proves that there was a three-year period of "secret" preaching. On the contrary they presuppose the existence of opposition and oppression that necessitated a policy of precaution and lying low on the part of the Muslims.

Even the incident that reportedly led to the Prophet's taking Dâr al-Arqam at the foot of the Ṣafâ hill as the centre of his activities and as the venue of the Muslims' prayers and meetings, points to the same conclusion. It is said that the Muslims, for fear of being harassed by the unbelievers, used to perform their prayers in solitary valleys of Makka. Once while they were thus engaged in prayer a party of the unbelievers came upon them and began to abuse them which ultimately resulted in a scuffle in the course of which Sa'd ibn 'Abî Waqqâṣ injured an unbeliever.[4] This incident took place at least a couple of years after the beginning of the Prophet's call. At any rate, Dâr al-Arqam was not taken as the meeting-place of the Muslims from the very beginning and definitely not before the conversion of a number of persons outside the family circle of the Prophet, including the conversion of Al-Arqam ibn 'Abî Al-Arqam of Banû Makhzûm, 'Abû Jahl's own clan, who was the owner of the house.

If we take into consideration and collate all these facts the following picture emerges. The Messenger of Allah, on being commanded to "warn" his people and to perform prayer, immediately started doing so. His having been called to Prophethood and Messengership was no secret — it was known to the People of Makka from the very start. His prayers in the new manner were also noticed by the People. One of the earliest converts, 'Abû Bakr, not only made no secret of his conversion but also persuaded a number of well-to-do persons from different clans to embrace the new faith. As Islam thus began to make steady progress it alarmed the conservative Quraysh leaders

1. *Musnad,* II., p.95; *Tirmidhî,* no.3764; *Al-Mustadrak,* III, p.83; *Ibn Mâjah,* I, p.39 (no.105) and Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqât,* III, p.269.

2. *Bukhârî,* no.3864.

3. Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqât,* III, pp.269-270; Ibn al-Jawzî, *Manâqib 'Umar,* (Bâb II), p. 18.

4. Ibn Hishâm, I, p.263.

who started their opposition to it. Such opposition sometimes reached the extent of physical assaults, such as that inflicted on 'Abû Bakr and Ṭalḥah. This development put the Prophet and the Muslims on the side of caution and they began to perform their prayers unobserved in order to avoid being harassed or being involved in open clashes. Even then clashes took place. Ultimately, therefore, Dâr al-Arqam was fixed as the place for their prayers and meetings. At the end of some three years the passages 15:94 and 26:214 were revealed directing the Messenger of Allah to carry on the work of propagation disregarding and defying opposition and also to expand the method of preaching from personal contacts to addressing the public at fairs, market-places and similar gatherings. Thus Ibn Isḥâq's statement that 'Abû Bakr made his conversion known and called others to accept the new faith and the other statement that "open" preaching started with the revelation of the above mentioned passages at the end of three years of the Prophet's mission would both be correct.

II. THE EARLY CONVERTS

All the reports agree in stating that the first person to belive in the Prophet was his wife, Khadîjah (r.a.). Next come three persons, 'Alî ibn 'Abî Ṭâlib, Zayd ibn Ḥârithah and 'Abû Bakr. The reports differ regarding the relative order of their conversion,[1] but there is no doubt that they were the very earliest converts after Khadîjah and that no long periods intervened between their conversions. Since 'Alî and Zayd were both members of the Prophet's household, there could be no doubt that outside his private and family circle 'Abû Bakr was the first person to believe in him. Almost all the reports say that 'Alî was about 10 years old when he embraced Islam. It may also be assumed, as 'Abû al-'A'lâ Maudûdî points out, that the Prophet's daughters, Zaynab, Umm Kulthûm and Ruqayyah (r.a.), who were all given in marriage prior to the Prophet's call, must also have embraced Islam following their parents. As regards Fâṭimah (r.a.), she was born in the cradle of Islam, one year after the call.[2]

'Abû Bakr was the Prophet's friend since his boyhood and was a successful merchant with a considerable fortune. He was liked by all for his pleas-

1. See Ibn Hishâm, I, pp.245-246, 247, 249; Ibn Isḥâq, *Al-Siyar wa al-Maghâzî*, pp. 138-140; Al-Dhahabî, *Al-Sîrat etc.*, pp.127, 137-133 and *Siyar A'lâm al-Nubalâ'*,II, p.115; Al-Ṭabarî, *Târikh*, II, 309-310, 312-313, 317 (I./1159-1160,1163-1164,1168).

2. Maudûdî, *op. cit.*, II, 143-144 n.

ing personality and was an expert in the genealogy and family history of the Quraysh. Immediately on his conversion he undertook to disseminate the truth among his closest friends and acquaintances. Within a few days at least five persons belonging to four different clans embraced Islam at his instance.[1] They were:

'Uthmân ibn 'Affân ibn 'Abî al-'Âṣ of Banû 'Umayyah

Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm ibn Khuwaylid of Banû Asad

'Abd al-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf of Banû Zuhrah

Sa'd ibn Abî Waqqâṣ (Mâlik ibn 'Uhayb) of Banû Zuhrah

Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubayd Allah ibn 'Uthmân of Banû Taym

Abû Bakr brought all these persons to the Prophet and they embraced Islam at his hand and also performed prayers.[2] In their turn they worked as missionaries of the new faith to their close circles. Ibn Isḥâq gives a list of some fifty persons who became Muslims at this initial stage and before the beginning of what he calls "open" preaching.[3] The list appears to contain a couple of persons who could not have embraced Islam at that time, such as 'Â'ishah (r.a) who had not been born at that time; but otherwise it is not exhaustive and leaves out many others who embraced Islam during the very early phase. But even from Ibn Isḥâq's list it would be clear that there was no important Quraysh clan from which Islam had not gained converts dur-ring this period. The clan-wise distribution of only those of Ibn Isḥâq's list about whose early conversion there is no doubt stands as follows:

Banû Hâshim:

1. 'Alî ibn 'Abî Ṭâlib
2. Ja'far ibn 'Abî Ṭâlib
3. His wife 'Asmâ' bint 'Umays

Banû al-Muṭṭalib:

4. 'Ubaydah ibn al-Ḥârith ibn al-Muṭṭalib

Banû 'Abd Shams ibn 'Abd Manâf:

5. 'Abû Ḥudhayfah ibn 'Utbah ibn Rabî'ah

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, pp.250-252.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, pp.252-262.

Banû 'Umayyah:

6. 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân
7. Khâlid ibn Sa'îd ibn al-'Âṣ ibn 'Umayyah
8. His wife 'Umaymah (or 'Umaynah) bint Khalaf (originally from Banû Khuzâ'ah)

Confederates of Banû 'Umayyah:

9. 'Abd Allah ibn Jaḥsh ibn Ri'âb
10. 'Abû Aḥmad ibn Jaḥsh ibn Ri'âb (brother of the above)

Banû Taym:

11. 'Abû Bakr
12. Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubayd Allah
13. 'Asmâ' bint 'Abû Bakr

Confederates of Banû Taym:

14. Ṣuhayb ibn Sinân al-Rûmî

Banû Asad:

15. Al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm

Banû Zuhrah:

16. 'Abd al-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf
17. Sa'd ibn 'Abî Waqqâṣ
18. 'Umayr ibn 'Abî Waqqâṣ
19. Al-Muṭṭalib ibn Azhar (cousin of no.16)
20. Ramlah bint 'Abî 'Awf (wife of the above and of Banû Sahm)

Confederates of Banû Zuhrah:

21. 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ûd
22. Khabbâb ibn al-Aratt
23. Mas'ûd ibn Rabî' ibn al-Qârî

Banû 'Adiyy:

24. Sa'îd ibn Zayd ibn 'Amr ibn Nufayl
25. His wife Fâṭimah bint al-Khaṭṭâb (sister of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb)

26. 'Âmir ibn Rabî'ah ('Abû 'Abd Allâh)
27. Nu'aym ibn 'Abd Allah al-Naḥḥâm

Confederates of Banû 'Adiyy:

28. Khâlid ibn Bukayr ibn 'Abd Yalîl
29. 'Âmir " " " "
30. 'Aqîl " " " "
31. 'Ilyâs " " " "
32. Wâqid ibn 'Abd Allâh

Banû Jumaḥ:

33. 'Uthmân ibn Maẓ'ûn
34. Qudâmah ibn Maẓ'ûn
35. 'Abd Allah ibn Maẓ'ûn
36. Al-Sâ'ib ibn 'Uthmân ibn Maẓ'ûn
37. Ma'mâr ibn al-Ḥârith ibn Ma'mâr
38. Ḥâṭib " " " "
39. His wife Fâṭimah bint Mujallal
40. Ḥaṭṭâb ibn al-Ḥârith (brother of no.34)
41. His wife Fukayhah bint Yâsir

Banû Sahm:

42. Khunays ibn Ḥudhâfah

Banû Makhzûm:

43. 'Abû Salamah ('Abd Allâh ibn 'Abd al-Asad)
44. Al-Arqam ibn 'Abî al-Arqam
45. 'Ayyâsh ibn 'Abî Rabî'ah
46. His wife 'Asmâ' bint Salamah

Confederate of Banû Makhzûm:

47. 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir

Banû 'Âmir ibn Lu'ayy:

48. Salîṭ ibn 'Amr (ibn 'Abd Shams)
49. Ḥâṭib " " " "

Banû Fihr ibn Mâlik:

50. 'Abû 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrâḥ

Thus there was practically no important family and clan from whom someone had not embraced the new faith. And though the number was by no means large, the very fact that so many clans were affected meant that the movement, though not publicly launched, was not at all a secret affair. The list, as already mentioned, is not exhaustive. We get from other sources the names of at least an equal number of other persons who embraced Islam at a very early period, definitely before the migration to Abyssinia which took place in the middle of the fifth year of the Prophet's mission, i.e., barely a year and a half after what is called the beginning of public propogation. A list of those early converts not mentioned in Ibn Isḥâq's work is appended to this chapter. It may be noted here that among those mentioned by Ibn Isḥâq and listed above there are at least three who were very closely related to the prominent leaders of opposition to the Prophet. One of these three is 'Abû Ḥudhayfah ibn 'Utbah ibn Rabî'ah (no. 5) who was a son of the opposition leader 'Utbah ibn Rabî'ah. The second is Khâlid ibn Sa'îd ibn al-'Âṣ ibn 'Umayyah (no. 7) whose father, Sa'îd ibn al-'Âṣ, otherwise known as 'Abû Uḥayḥah, was another prominent opponent of the Prophet. The third is 'Ayyâsh ibn 'Abî Rabî'ah, half-brother of the Prophet's fiercest opponent,'Abû Jahl.

III. PUBLIC PROPAGATION

After the intial period of some three years the passages 15:94 and 26:214 were revealed. They contained directives to the Messenger of Allah to undertake the work of propagation without heeding the ridcule and opposition of the unbelievers and to warn his relatives and kinsfolk against the consequences of unbelief and polytheism. He immediately took a number of steps to give effect to these directives. The exact chronological order of these steps is not known, but it is clear that they followed in quick succession and marked the beginning of a new phase in his work and mission.

(a) One of the steps taken by the Prophet was to make a formal call to the members of his own family and kinsfolk generally, asking them unequivocally to accept Islam and to abandon polytheism. The method adopted by him was that on one night he invited all the members of Banû Hâshim and Banû al-Muṭṭalib to a banquet. Some 40 to 45 persons including Ḥamzah and 'Abû Lahab attended it. After the dinner the Prophet was about to

address the gathering when 'Abû Lahab forestalled him and started the talk. Addressing the Prophet 'Abû Lahab reminded him that those present there were all his superiors — his uncles and cousins — and that whatever he intended to talk about he should not ask them to change their religion; for his clan, in fact the whole of Quraysh, had not the strength and capacity to face the combined opposition of all the Arab tribes on account of his work. 'Abû Lahab ended his remarks by saying that it behoved Banû Hâshim to restrain Muḥammad (ﷺ) before the others took steps to do so, adding that he had not been aware of anyone who had brought so much hardship and difficulty upon his own clan. The Prophet in fact did not find any chance to talk on that occasion.[1]

Undaunted, he had another banquet prepared on another night to which those people were invited. On that occasion he addressed them at the end of the dinner, explaining his mission and work and telling them clearly that he had indeed brought them a matter in which lay their good not only in this world but also in the hereafter. According to one version of the report, he addressed by name individually each member of his famliy and clan, reminding them that though he was their kinsman and relative he would be of no avail to them as against Allah's judgement and retribution. To emphasize his earnestness he further told them that if they so wished they could ask of him for whatever he had of worldly possessions, but he would have no power to save them from the consequences of their unbelief. At the end of the discussion 'Abû Ṭâlib stated that although he was not ready to forsake his paternal religion, he would nonetheless go all the way to support and protect the Prophet against the opposition and enmity of others. 'Abû Lahab, on the other hand, clearly expressed his disagreement with the position thus taken by 'Abû Ṭâlib and insisted once again that it was the duty of the clan to restrain the Prophet.[2]

The incidents of these two dinner meetings and what transpired in them are treated generally by the chroniclers as marking the beginning of open propagation; but if one looks at them a little carefully one would see that the Qur'ânic directive to the Prophet to warn his near relatives and the steps he took to carry out that directive have a deeper significance. In fact the steps described were not really needed just for the sake of making the Prophet's

1. Ibn Isḥâq, *Kitâb al-Siyar wa al-Maghâzî*, pp.145-146; Al-Ṭabarî, *Târikh*, (I / 1171-1172) Ibn al-Athîr, *Al-Kâmil etc.*, II, pp.40-41; Al-Dhahabî. *Al-Sîrat* etc., pp.144-145.

2. *Ibid.*

mission and work known to his family and clan. For, as we have noticed, they already knew about it and about the conversion of some memebrs of the clan, at least of ʻAlî. The Qur'ânic directive and the above-mentioned incidents have rather a threefold significance. In the first place, it meant that the Prophet should embark upon the work of propagation disregarding not only the attitude and opposition of the other people of Makka but also without hesitating about the attitude of his own clan. He should make a formal and decisive call to them to accept the truth, regardless of the consequences of whether or not that step would alienate their sympathy and support for him.[1] Secondly, it was also necessary to remove any misgivings that might have lurked in their minds that their blood relationship with the Prophet and their worldly support for him would stand them in stead on the Day of Judgement and that they would be entitled to some sort of a preferential treatment on that occasion. They were to be told clearly that that would in no way be the case and that the Prophet, even if he wanted so, would be of no avail to them unless they had faith and had abandoned the wrong way. Thirdly, the Prophet's mission and work had reached such a stage as made it necessary for him to ascertain, and for his kinsfolk to determine, their exact policy and stand *vis-à-vis* the struggle in which he had been involved and which was already on. 'Abû Lahab's talk at the first banquet shows that he spoke not out of ignorance of what the Prophet's mission was but with a full awareness of its implications and of the task that devovled on the clan as a whole in consequence. In view of this fact it is clear that the banquet parties were really in the nature of "full sessions of the committee of the whole clan" to consider the issue of the Prophet's mission and the policy to be adopted by his clan regarding the opposition he faced on that account. 'Abû Ṭâlib's statememt was not simply an expression of his personal opinion but rather a statement of policy for the whole clan. It was a momentous decision with far-reaching consequences; and he scrupulously adhered to it till the end of his life. 'Abû Lahab's decision, on the other hand, was equally significant. He openly and decisively declared his policy of opposition to the Prophet's mission. In doing so, however, he contravened the accepted norm and age-old tradition of the Arabs in two ways. He publicly went against the almost unanimous decision of the clan, thereby causing a cleavage in the clan

1. One version of the report relating to the incident indicates that the Prophet was indeed suffering from some hesitation on the question. See Ibn Isḥâq, *Kitâb al-Siyar wa Maghâzî*, pp. 145-146.

solidarity. He also abandoned the universally followed Arab custom of supporting and protecting a clansman against the opposition and enmity of others irrespective of the issue involved. His conduct was all the more unusual because he was the Prophet's uncle[1] and, according to the Arab notion, in the position of his father.

If 'Abû Lahab thus declared his opposition to the Prophet before a council of his own clan, he soon did so before a public assmblage of the Makkan clans in general. This happened in the course of the second step which the Prophet apears to have taken about that time in pursuance of the programme of public propagation. It was an acknowledged practice at the time that if a person perceived an imminent danger to his people, such as a sudden appearance of a hostile force near the town or settlement, to go on top of a high place, usually a hill, and to raise cries of alarm to warn his people. Following this custom the Prophet went one morning to the top of the Ṣafâ hill near the Ka'ba and raised cries of alarm on top of his voice, calling by name the different clans and families. At this the people soon gathered at the spot. Those who could not come up themselves, sent someone to ascertain the matter for them. When the Makkans thus assembled near the hill, the Prophet began by asking them whether they would believe him if he told them that a fully armed and large enemy force were waiting on the other side of the hill for a sudden attack upon the town. The people shouted back affirmatively, adding that they had never experienced any lying on his part. Thereupon he addressed them saying that he was there to warn them against a still graver and inevitable danger which awaited them, that of Allah's retribution and punishment if they did not abandon the various forms of polytheism and instead worshipped Him alone. He also made it clear to them that he had been appointed by Allah His Messenger and warner to the people.

The reports regarding this incident do not mention the immediate reaction of the people of the other clans to this open call at Ṣafâ; but they specifically mention the reaction of 'Abû Lahab who, of all persons, came forward, openly announced his opposition to the Prophet, denounced him and cried destruction for him.[2] According to some reports, it was as a sequel to this attitude and action of Abû Lahab's that *Sûrat al-Masad* (111) was revealed.[3]

1. 'Abû Ṭâlib and 'Abû Lahab were born of different mothers.
2. See Ibn Sa'd, I, 200.
3. *Ibid.*, *Bukhârî*, no. 4971. also Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr*, XXX, pp. 336-337 and Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr*, VIII, p. 534.

The incident is illustrative of how the phase of public propagation started. The sources mention three other incidents that by their very nature must be assigned to this initial period of public propagation. The first was that the Prophet one day went to the Ka'ba compound with some of his followers and started addressing the people there, calling them to give up the worship of idols and to worship Allah Alone. At this the Quraysh leaders and their supporters present there made an assault upon him. His step-son,[1] Al-Ḥârith ibn 'Abî Hâlah came to his defence but was so severely beaten that he died on the spot.[2] He was the first martyr in the cause of Islam.

The second incident was a similar attempt made by 'Abû Bakr. He expressed his intention to the Prophet to go to the Ka'ba and there proclaim the truth and recite the Qur'ân. The Prophet pointed out that the Muslims were still very few in number and that he feared that the unbelievers would assault 'Abû Bakr. The latter, in his spirit and enthusiasm, insisted on going there and was ultimately allowed to do so. As he started loudly reciting the Qur'ân the urbelievers at the Ka'ba compound surrounded him and attacked him. The leading part in the attack was taken by 'Utbah ibn Rabî'ah of Banû 'Abd Shams, who with his shoes so severly beat 'Abû Bakr that he was badly wounded, specially at the face, and fell unconscious. He was rescued by some of his clansmen of Banû Taym, but he remained in coma since the time of the occurrence, which was in the morning, till the evening. The incident was about to cause an inter-clan warfare to flare up; for the people of Banû Taym came in a body to the Ka'ba and vowed to take appropriate vengeance, particularly to kill 'Utbah, if anything happened to 'Abû Bakr. Fortunately he regained consciousness at night and gradually recovered.[3] An internecine warfare would have in fact broken out in consequence of either the killing of Al-Ḥârith ibn 'Abî Hâlah or the assault upon 'Abû Bakr but for the restraint exercised by the Prophet on both the occasions.

The third incident related to 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ûd. Like 'Abû Bakr, he also went one day to the Ka'ba compound, proclaimed monotheism and loudly recited the Qur'ân. He was similarly assaulted and wounded. Once again the Prophet exercised restraint and prevented the incident from degen-

1. Khadîjah's (r.a.) son by her first husband.

2. *Al-'Iṣâbah*, I, p. 293, no. 1501.

3. Ibn al-'Athîr, *Al-Bidâyah etc.*, III, pp. 30-31; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, IV, p. 447, No. 1254 (*Kitâb al-Nisâ'*, Umm al-Khayr).

erating into an inter-clan conflict.[1]

In spite of such opposition the Messenger of Allah continued the work of preaching. Reports say that he used to go on preaching missions to the various tribes and clans of Makka and its vicinity and sometimes received adverse treatment from them. He also repaired to the different markets and fairs that were held at specified periods of the year, such as at 'Ukâẓ, Marr al-Ẓahrân and Majanna, and preached Islam to the people.

Being aware of the nature and composition of the Arabian society, especially of Makka, and of the position and influence of its leaders, he paid his attention to those leaders, naturally thinking that their conversion, or at least of some of them, would facilitate the acceptance of the truth by the generality of the people. We get from the Qur'ân glimpses of at least two occasions on which the Prophet was dealing with the leaders. Once he was conversing with some Makkan leaders in order to convince them of the truth of Islam. In the midst of that discussion a blind man, Ibn 'Umm Maktûm, came to him and asked him to explain Islam, thus interrupting him in his talk with the leaders. The Messenger of Allah, in his eagerness to win over the leaders, did not pay attention to Ibn 'Umm Maktûm's words. With reference to this incident *Sûrat 'Abasa* (no.80) was revealed, reprimanding the Messenger of Allah for his inattention to the poor man and reminding him (the Prophet) of the need to pay proper attention to the sincere enquirer rather than to those who were insincere and arrogant.[2] On another occasion the Makkan leaders expressed their willingness to sit with the Prophet for discussing Islam if only he agreed to dismiss from his presence the poor converts who always remained in his company. The Makkan leaders considered it beneath their dignity to sit along with those people who, according to their notion, were of no rank and position. Instantly Allah guided His Messenger to the right course of action which is contained in the passages 6:52 and 18:28. He was told not to accede to the demand of the unbelieving leaders and to remain happy with the sincere and devoted believers.[3]

IV. MAKKA AND BEYOND

The Makkan leaders were in fact not trying to understand Islam but were rather offering determined opposition to it. The nature of this opposition and its various aspects will be discussed in the following chapter. Here it

1. Ibn Hishâm, pp. 314-315.

2. See for instance Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr* XXX, p. 33 and Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr*, VIII, pp. 342-343.

3. See *Muslim* (ed. F.A. Bâqî), no. 2413; Al-Qurṭubî, *Tafsîr*, VI, pp. 421-433 and X, pp. 390-391; Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr*, III, pp. 254-255 and V, p. 148.

may be noted that the enmity and oppressive conduct of the leaders sometimes defeated its purpose and caused additional conversion to Islam. Sometimes the truth made its own impression upon the heart of even an erstwhile and fierce opponent. Sometimes the Quraysh leader's malpropaganda against the Prophet and Islam indirectly helped the spread of his name and the ideas of Islam among the tribes beyond Makka and elsewhere in Arabia. These three features of the gradual progress of Islam are typified in the conversion of Ḥamzah and 'Umar of the Makkan upper class on the one hand, and of Ṭufayl ibn 'Amr al-Dawsî, 'Abû Dharr al-Ghifârî and some others from the tribes outside Makka, on the other.

(a) *Ḥamzah's conversion to Islam*: Ḥamzah ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib was the Prophet's uncle and was about the same age. He was very strong and brave and was on that account both respected and feared by his community. The immediate cause of his conversion to Islam was 'Abû Jahl's maltreatment of the Prophet. Once 'Abû Jahl met him on the street near Ṣafâ and severely abused him and maltreated him. He bore all that silently and patiently without uttering a word in reply. 'Abû Jahl then went to the Ka'ba compound and there sat with his companions. The incident was noticed, however, by a maid servant of 'Abd Allah ibn Jud'ân's who lived nearby. She reported it in detail to Ḥamzah who was then just returning from a hunting mission. Deeply annoyed and enraged at what he heard, Ḥamzah went straight to the Ka'ba and with his bow struck 'Abû Jahl, demanding to know why he had maltreated and abused Muḥammad (ﷺ) and declaring at the same time that he (Ḥamzah) too believed in the truth of what the Prophet preached. 'Abû Jahl's supporters from Banû Makhzûm stood up to counter-attack Ḥamzah but they were restrained by 'Abû Jahl who, conscious of his guilt and apprehensive of the consequences of Ḥamzah's ultimate conversion to Islam, attempted to pacify him by admitting that he ('Abû Jahl) had really been bad to the Prophet. The damage done to the unbelievers' cause by 'Abû Jahl's rashness was, however, irreparable. Ḥamzah's heart had really changed; he went to the Prophet and announced his conversion to Islam.[1]

The authorities differ about the date of Ḥamzah's conversion, some placing it in the second year of the Prophet's mission, while the others placing it

1. Ibn Hishâm, pp. 291-292; Ibn Isḥâq, *Kitâb al-Siyar wa al-Maghâzî*, pp. 171-172. Another version of the report says that Ḥamzah hesitated for sometime before ultimately declaring his acceptance of Islam to the Prophet.

in the sixth year.[1] Both these terminal dates appear to be incorrect. It is clear that his conversion took place most probably after the initial period of private preaching, that is, after the third year of the mission. On the other hand, it is also generally admitted that he embraced Islam before 'Umar whose conversion took place most probably in the fifth year of the mission, shortly after the first migration to Abyssinia. Ḥamzah's conversion was an important gain to Islam. Ibn Isḥâq specifically mentions that the unbelievers recognized the change brought about in the situation by Ḥamzah's conversion and they refrained from some of their oppressive activities.[2]

(b) *The conversion of 'Umar*: The next important accession to Islam was the conversion of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb of Banû 'Adiyy. He was an equally strong and spirited person and was, by his own admission, a fierce opponent of Islam and the Prophet, oppressing and persecuting new converts including some of his own relatives. He possessed, however, keen intellect, a quick understanding of affairs and, above all, a very good heart. Already his own sister, Fâṭimah, and her husband, Sa'îd ibn Zayd ibn 'Amr, and an elder half-brother, Zayd ibn al-Khaṭṭâb[3] had embraced Islam before him. He also seems to have been gradually inclined towards it.

There are a number of reports relating to 'Umar's conversion.[4] They seem to differ in matters of detail but in fact they supplement one another. All the reports, however, more or less unanimously emphasize the following facts:

(i) When 'Umar embraced Islam the Muslims were still in a very weak position, most of them attempting to hide their conversion and they and the Prophet still continued their main activities at *Dâr al-Arqam*. According to 'Umar's own statement, there was not a single Muslim at Makka who, on account of his conversion, was not maltreated and persecuted.

1. See Zurqânî, *Sharḥ Mawâhib etc.*, I., pp. 308-309; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, I, pp. 353-354, no. 1826.

2. Ibn Hishâm, p. 291.

3. *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, II, pp. 238-239. When Zayd ibn al-Khaṭṭâb was killed in the battle of Yamâmah 'Umar remarked that his brother had preceded him in respect of two good things — acceptance of Islam and attainment of martyrdom.

4. Most of these reports are reproduced in *'Usd al-Ghâbah,* Vol. III (new edition), no.3824. See also Al-Dhahabî, *Al-Sîrat al-Nabawiyyah*, Beirut, 1987, pp. 172-181; Ibn Hishâm, pp. 342-350; Ibn Sa'd, III, p. 269; *Musnad*, I, pp. 17-18.

(ii) His conversion was brought about neither by the personal approach of anyone, nor by his having listened to any public preaching, but by his having either accidentally or intentionally listened to and perused some passages of the Qur'ân.

(iii) Like 'Abû Bakr he also made no secret of his conversion. He declared it publicly and instantly and was in consequence denounced and heckled by the unbelievers.

The reports relating to 'Umar's conversion may be classified into three categories according to their principal subject matter — (a) those that speak about the Prophet's wish and prayer to Allah for strengthening Islam by the conversion of either 'Abû Jahl or 'Umar and also about the position of the Muslims; (b) those that deal mainly with the circumstances of 'Umar's conversion and (c) those that speak about the immediate consequences of his conversion.

As regards the first category, some reference has already been made to it.[1] Of the second category, the most important are two statements by 'Umar himself that have come down to us through different chains of narrators, with slight defferences in the wordings and details. One of these statements says that one day he went out with the intention of assaulting the Prophet but found out that he had already gone to the Ka'ba and started praying there. 'Umar stood silently behind him and listened to his recitation of part of *sûrat al-Ḥâqqah* (69) in the course of his prayer and was so moved by it that, in 'Umar's words, Islam took possession of his heart.[2] A slightly different version of this report makes the incident take place at night and adds that when the Prophet, after finishing his prayer, was returning home, 'Umar followed him and on his realizing that someone was following him and enquiring who it was 'Umar disclosed his identity and declared his faith.[3]

The second of 'Umar's statements gives a rather detailed account. It says that one day he went out taking his sword with him and determined to kill the Prophet.[4] On the way he met Nu'aym ibn 'Abd Allah (al-Naḥḥâm), a

1. *Supra*, pp.518-519.

2. *Musnad* I, pp.17,18.

3. Ibn Hishâm, pp. 347-348; Al-Dhahabi, *Al-Sîrat al-Nabawiyyah*, *op. cit.*, p.173; Ibn al-Jawzi, *Manâqib 'Umar*, p.15.

4. Ibn Isḥâq says that the Quraysh leaders had engaged 'Umar to kill the Prophet (*Kitâb Siyar wa al-Maghâzî*,181). See also *Usd al-Ghâbah*, *op. cit.*

person of 'Umar's own clan who had embraced Islam but had kept it a secret to avoid persecution. He asked 'Umar about his destination, and as he disclosed his purpose and also spoke ill of the Prophet, Nu'aym diverted him ('Umar) by saying that he should first set his own house in order. Surprised at this remark 'Umar demanded of Nu'aym to explain what he meant. He then divulged that 'Umar's own sister (Fâṭimah) and brother-in-law (Sa'îd ibn Zayd ibn 'Amr) had become Muslims. Thereupon 'Umar changed his course and went to the latters' house and actually found them in the state of reading from a written object part of the Qur'ân. In his rage he at first assaulted Sa'îd and when Fâṭimah came to his defence she also was struck. When 'Umar saw the wound and blood on his sister, however, he repented, calmed down and entreated her to show him the piece they were reading from. She at first objected but ultimately allowed him to see the passage. As he went through it he was so moved that he exclaimed words signifying the change in him. Encouraged at this Khabbâb ibn al-Aratt, who had hid himself in the house at 'Umar's approach and who had actually been helping the Sa'îd family with the reading of the Qur'ân, came out and congratulated 'Umar saying that the Prophet had the other day prayed to Allah for his conversion. 'Umar says that at that time the Prophet, whenever a person of no means embraced Islam, assigned a couple of such persons to a well-to-do Muslim for their shelter and maintenance, thus indicating that Khabbâb was so assigned to Sa'îd. However, being informed by them that the Prophet was then at the *Dâr al-Arqam* near Ṣafâ 'Umar went there and declared his acceptance of Islam at the hands of the Prophet. The Muslims who were present there were so elated with joy that they shouted *Allahu Akbar* so loudly that it was heard from the streets of Makka. 'Umar adds that hitherto they had been taking care to hide their activities.[1]

The sequel to his conversion has also been described by 'Umar himself. He says that he wanted to make his acceptance of Islam known to all and to face what the other converts had been facing of opposition and persecution. Hence he first went to the house of an important Makkan leader (according to one version, Abû Jahl) and knocked at his door. When he came out 'Umar informed him of his ('Umar's) conversion. That leader first expressed his surprise but when 'Umar repeated the fact he asked him not to do so and shut the door against him. He then went to another Quraysh leader's house,

1. Ibn Hishâm, pp.345-346; Ibn Sa'd, III, pp.267-269; *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, III, pp.644-647.

did the same thing and was similarly treated. Ultimately he went to the Ka'ba where there was a gathering of Quraysh people and declared before them his conversion to Islam. At this the assemblage burst out and attacked him. He also fought back. After a good deal of fracas Al-'Âṣ ibn Wâ'il came there and declared his protection for 'Umar. At this the people stopped their fighting. 'Umar did not, however, like to be protected by Al-'Aṣ and gave up his protection in spite of his remonstrances.[1] Two other statements by 'Umar's son confirm that the Makkan unbelievers actually heckled 'Umar on his conversion and that Al-'Âṣ ibn Wâ'il had offered him protection.[2]

According to Ibn Isḥâq the conversion of 'Umar took place shortly after the first migration to Abyssinia[3]. This event took place in the fifth year of the mission. On the other hand Al-Wâqidî, and following him Ibn Sa'd and some others, place 'Umar's conversion in the sixth year of the mission. All the reports agree in saying, however, that his conversion greatly strengthened the position of the Muslims. Previously they had not been able to pray openly at the Ka'ba; but after his conversion the situation changed and they started doing so.[4] In a way 'Umar's conversion marks the climax of Islam's success at Makka prior to the Prophet's migration to Madina. No other important Quraysh leader appears to have come within the fold of Islam before that event. By the time of his conversion, however, Islam had already stepped outside the bounds of Makka and had started gaining converts from various other Arabian tribes.

(c) *Conversion of Ṭufayl ibn 'Amr al-Dawsî*: One of the early instances of conversion from outside Makka was that of Ṭufayl ibn 'Amr al-Dawsî. The account, as given by himself, illustrates, on the one hand, how the Makkan leaders attempted to prevent visitors and foreign traders from coming in contact with the Prophet and how, on the other, such attempts rebounded on them and indirectly paved the way for the spread of Islam into the interior of Arabia. Ṭufayl was a leader of his own tribe, al-Daws, and was a poet. He says that once he came to Makka on some business. As soon as he arrived there a number of Quraysh people met him and warned him against

1. *Ibid.* See also Ibn Isḥâq, *Kitâb al-Siyar wa al-Maghâzî*, pp.184-185.

2. *Bukhârî*, nos. 3864,3865; Al-Bayḥaqî, *Dalâ'il*, II, 9; Ibn al-Jawzî, *op. cit.*

3. Ibn Hishâm, pp. 342, 343-344.

4. See for instance Ibn Sa'd, III, p. 270; Ibn Hishâm, p. 242; Ibn Isḥâq, *Kitâb al-Siyar wa al-Maghâzî*, p.185.

Muḥammad (ﷺ) saying that he was a problemetical and enigmatic person who had been causing dissension in the society and whose words were like sorcery, alienating sons from parents, brothers from brothers and hunsbands from wives. They told Ṭufayl never to approach him nor to listen to what he said. Ṭufayl was so convinced by their talk that he made up his mind to avoid the Prophet. On the following day when Ṭufayl came to the Ka'ba, however, he saw the Prophet praying there and happened to hear some of what he was reciting in the prayer. The words sounded so sweet and impressive to Ṭufayl that he started arguing within himself that he was a poet and an intelligent young man capable of distinguishing between right and wrong. Why should he not then meet the person and listen to what he had to say? If it was good he might well accept it, if not, he would reject it and leave him. Thus arguing within himself Ṭufayl followed the Prophet when he returned home after his prayer, met him there and told him all that his kinsmen had spoken about him and also about his own impression of what he had just heard of the Prophet's recitation in prayer. Ṭufayl then urged him to explain his message to him. Thereupon the Prophet presented Islam to Ṭufayl and also recited to him a passage from the Qur'ân. "By God", says Ṭufayl, "I had never before heard so beautiful words, nor so reasonable a statement; and I instantly embraced Islam". The Prophet commissioned him, at his own request, to preach Islam among his people. On return home Ṭufayl converted his own family to Islam and continued to propagate it among his people, visiting the Prophet a second time before his migration to Madina. Subsequently he, along with 70 or 80 families of Muslims from his own tribe, met the Prophet at Madina after the battle of the Ditch.[1]

The internal evidence of the account suggests that Ṭufayl's conversion took place shortly after the beginning of public propagation of Islam. For, as will be seen in the following chapter, it was then that the Quraysh leaders decided to make a uniform statement about the Prophet to the visitors to Makka, saying that he was a sorcerer, instead of making different statements about him as they had hitherto been doing.

(d) *Ḍimâd al-Azdî's conversion*: Almost similar circumstances attended the conversion of Ḍimâd ibn Tha'labah of Azd Shanwa. He was an old acquaintance of the Prophet's and was himself a sort of a quack practising charms and blowings for curing various ailments. He came on a visit to

1. *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, III, pp.54-55.

Makka and was told by the people that Muḥammad (ﷺ) had gone mad. He told them that he could possibly cure him if given a chance to see him. In fact he met the Prophet and offered to cure him of his "madness". Thereupon the Prophet began to address him as follows[1]:

"All praise belongs to Allah. We praise Him and seek His assistance. Whomsoever He guides, none can mislead him; and whomsoever He allows to go astray, none can guide him to the right path. And I bear witness that there is none worthy to be worshipped except Allah Alone. There is no partner with him. And I bear witness that Muḥammad (ﷺ) is His servant and Messenger".

As soon as the Prophet finished uttering these words Ḍimâd stopped him and asked him to repeat them, which he did thrice at his request. Ḍimâd says that he was quite conversant with the types of compositions a soothsayer, a sorcerer and a poet were each wont to utter; but the Prophet's words were quite unlike any of those. His words bore meanings like the depth of an ocean. Therefore, says Ḍimâd, he accepted Islam then and there. The Prophet asked him to return to his own people and preach Islam to them, which he did.[2]

(e) *Conversion of 'Amr ibn 'Abasah and 'Abû Dharr al-Ghifârî*: While Ṭufayl and Ḍimâd were attracted to the Prophet rather by the mal-propaganda of the Quraysh leaders, 'Amr ibn 'Abasah al-Sulamî and 'Abû Dhar al-Ghifârî (Jundub ibn Junâdah) came to him by somehow hearing about him. 'Amr ibn 'Abasah is counted among the *ḥanîfs* who had given up the worship of idols and had started worshipping Allah Alone. He says that one day while he was thus speaking out his views he was told by one of his listeners that there had appeared at Makka a person who propagated similar views. Therefore 'Amr travelled to Makka and there came to know that the person he sought was working behind the scene and could not be seen except at night when he would come to the Ka'ba to cicumambulate it. Accordingly 'Amr waited there at night and, when the Prophet came there, met him and asked him about himeself and his mission. The Prophet said that he had been commissioned as Allah's Messenger, that it is Allah Alone Who should be worshipped and that He has no partner with Him. The Prophet also informed 'Amr about some other teachings of Islam. He then

1. The Arabic text, which has become an oft-repeated formula in Islamic discourses, runs as follows: (الحمد لله نحمده ونستعينه، من يهده الله فلا مضل له، ومن يضلل فلا هادي له، وأشهد أن لا إلـه إلا الله وحده لا شريك له، وأشهد أن محمدا عبده ورسوله....)

2. *Ibid.*, pp.41-42.

asked the Prophet who else had accepted his teachings. He replied that there were with him a slave and a free-man. 'Amr embraced Islam at the Prophet's hands and subsequently used to claim that he was the fourth person in the order of conversion. The claim does not appear to be quite correct, but there is no doubt that his conversion took place at a very early stage of the Prophet's mission. Ibn al-Athîr specifically says that 'Amr embraced Islam early, at the very beginning of Islam (أسلم قديما أول الإسلام). After his conversion 'Amr sought the Prophet's permission to stay with him, but was told to go back instead to his own people and to preach Islam among them. He did so and continued to preach Islam to his people for a long time till he heard about the Prophet's migration to Madina. Subsequently he met him there.[1]

Like 'Amr ibn 'Abasah, 'Abû Dharr also himself states that on coming to know that there had appeared a person at Makka who claimed to be Allah's Messenger, he sent his brother there to ascertain the facts. The latter came to Makka, met the Prophet and then returned home and reported his very favourable impressions about the Messenger of Allah. 'Abû Dharr was not, however, quite satisfied with the information. Therefore he himself came to Makka. He did not know the Prophet, but did not also dare ask anyone about him for fear of being harassed or persecuted by the unbelievers. Hence he kept on waiting at the Ka'ba. One evening 'Alî, while passing by him, noticed him as a stranger and invited him to stay that night at his ('Alî's) house. 'Abû Dharr did so but did not tell anything about himself to 'Alî. On the following day the latter similarly noticed 'Abû Dharr still waiting at the Ka'ba. Thinking that the man had not yet been able to find a place to stay at, 'Alî again took him to his house. On the way he asked 'Abû Dharr about the purpose of his visit to Makka. He at first hesitated to tell, but after making 'Alî promise that he would keep it a secret 'Abû Dharr told him that he ('Abû Dharr) was in search of the man who claimed himself to be Allah's Messenger. 'Alî told him that he was on the right course and with the right person, for he ('Alî) also was going to the Prophet. Thus did 'Abû Dharr, with 'Alî's help, meet the Prophet and after listening to him embraced Islam. The Prophet asked him to keep the fact of his conversion a secret at Makka, but he, being inspired and excited by the truth he had found, insisted on declaring it. In fact he came to the Ka'ba in the morning, announced his faith and loudly declared that there is no god except Allah and that Muḥammad

1. *Ibid.*, IV, pp.120-121.

(ﷺ) was his Messenger. At this the unbelievers who were assembled there surrounded him, attacked him and beat him severely. He was rescued only by the timely arrival of 'Abbâs ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib (the Prophet's uncle) who shouted out to the people saying that the person they were assaulting belonged to the Gifârî tribe by whose territory the Quraysh trade caravans passed. At this the people stopped beating 'Abû Dharr. On the following day he did the same thing, was again assaulted and was similarly rescued by 'Abbâs.[1]

The authorities differ regarding the exact date of 'Abû Dharr's conversion, some placing it rather late in the Makkan period. The circumstances narrated, however, correspond with the situation characteristic of the early phase of public propagation. Besides the case of 'Abû Dharr, however, there were other individuals like 'Abû Mûsâ al-'Ash'ârî ('Abd Allâh ibn Qays)[2] and Mu'ayqib ibn 'Abî Fâṭimah al-Dawsî[3] about whom there is no doubt that they had come to Makka and embraced Islam much earlier than the migration to Abyssinia.

The instances cited above illustrate the ways in which Islam made headway among the Arabs. At least three lines of development may be identified. In the first place, those who had been inclined towards monotheism prior to the rise of Islam, such as the *ḥanîfs*, rather readily came within its fold. The conversion of 'Amr ibn 'Abasah from outside Makka and of 'Ubayd Allah ibn Jaḥsh and, to some extent, of Sa'îd ibn Zayd ibn 'Amr are instances in point. Secondly, the traders and visitors who came to Makka on various occasions naturally came to know about the new movement. Some of them grew curious about the Prophet because of the malpropaganda of the Quraysh leaders, met him in confidence and ultimately embraced Islam. The instances of Ṭufayl ibn 'Amr al-Dawsî and Ḍimâd al-'Azdî are illustrative of this process. Thirdly, the non-Makkan converts like them and other visitors carried the message of Islam to their respective peoples and places. Being thus informed about the appearance of the Prophet and of Islam, some of the more inquisitive souls like 'Abû Dharr al-Ghifârî came to Makka to ascertain the facts and embraced Islam. That by all these processes Islam had been penetrating into the heart of Arabia is shown by the interesting case of

1. *Bukhârî*, no. 3861; *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, I, pp.301-303.
2. *Ibid.*, III, pp.245-246, V, pp.308-309.
3. *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 402-403.

Buraydah ibn al-Ḥaṣîb ibn 'Abd Allah and his people. It is stated that he came with some 80 families of his tribe, met the Prophet on his way to Madina during his migration there and all embraced Islam at his hands.[1] The very fact that Buraydah came with so many families of his tribe and thus embraced Islam at a time and place that were otherwise not very suitable for his doing so suggests, as Maudûdî points out,[2] that Buraydah must have had prior information about Islam and the Prophet.

One notable feature of the instances cited above, particularly of the earlier ones, was that on conversion all those persons returned to their peoples, being specifically commissioned by the Prophet to propagate Islam in their respective areas. This shows that not much later than the beginning of public propagation, in fact quite earlier than the migration to Abyssinia, he had already been looking beyond Makka. The migration to Abyssinia in the middle of the fifth year of the mission was in a way an outcome of this expanding outlook. That event constitutes the next important landmark in the progress of Islam. Before dealing with it, however, it is necessary to take into account the orientalists' views about this early phase of the mission and also to note the growth of Makkan opposition to Islam.

1. *Ibid.*, I, pp.175-176.
2. Maududi, *op. cit.*, II, p. 542.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XXI

LIST OF EARLY CONVERTS NOT MENTIONED IN THE LIST GIVEN IN IBN ISḤÂQ'S / IBN HISHÂM'S SÎRAH[1]

Banû Hashim:

(51) Ṣafiyyah bint ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib (The Prophet's paternal aunt and Al-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwâm's mother) —*'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V, pp. 492-493.

Banû ‘Abd Shams:

(52) Sahlah bint Suhayl ibn ‘Amr (wife of 'Abû Ḥudhayfah ibn ‘Utbah ibn Rabî‘ah). Embraced Islam early (أسلمت قديما) and migrated with her husband to Abyssinia. — *Al-'Iṣâbah,* IV, pp. 336-337, no. 595 (*Kitâb al-Nisâ'*).

Banû 'Umayyah:

(*53*) 'Umm Ḥabîbah (Ramlah). 'Abû Sufyân's daughter. She embraced Islam early and migrated with her husband ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Jaḥsh to Abyssinia. Subsequently became *'Umm al-Mu'minîn — Ibid*., pp. 305-306, no. 434., *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V, pp. 573-574.

Confederate of Banû 'Umayyah:

(54) ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Jaḥsh- *Ibid.*

Banû Taym:

(55) 'Umm Rûmân ('Abû Bakr's wife; mother of ‘Â'ishah and ‘Abd al-Raḥmân ibn 'Abî Bakr). Embraced Islam early. *Al-'Iṣâbah*, IV., pp. 450-452, No. 1271 (*Kitâb al-Nîsa'*); *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V, 583.

(56) Al-Ḥârith ibn Khâlid ibn Ṣakhr ibn ‘Âmir. Embraced Islam early. According to Ibn Isḥâq and others he migrated to Abyssinia with his wife. — *Al-'Iṣâbah*, I, p. 277, No. 1397; *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, I, pp. 335-336.

Banû Asad ibn ‘Abd al-‘Uzzâ:

(57) Khâlid ibn Ḥizâm (Khadîjah's nephew and Ḥakîm ibn Ḥizâm's brother). Embraced Islam early and died during his migration to Abyssinia. According to one report, the Qur'ânic passage 4:100 ﴿...ومن يخرج من بيته مهاجراً إلى الله ورسوله ثم يدركه الموت فقد وقع أجره على الله ...﴾ was revealed with reference to him. *Al-'Iṣâbah*, I., p. 403, no.

1. See *supra*, pp. 521-524.

2154; *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, II., p. 78.

(58) Al-Aswad ibn Nawfal ibn Khuwaylid ibn Asad (Khadîjah's nephew and Waraqah ibn Nawfal ibn Asad's cousin, i.e., paternal uncle's son). Embraced Islam early and, according to Ibn Isḥâq, went to Abyssinia on the second migration. His father, Nawfal ibn Khuwaylid, was very severe upon the Muslims. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, I, pp. 87-88; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, I, p. 46, no. 171.

(59) 'Amr ibn 'Umayyah ibn al-Ḥârith ibn Asad ibn 'Abd al-'Uzzâ. Embraced Islam early and migrated to Abyssinia where he died. *'Usd al-Ghâbah,* IV, p. 85.

(60) Yazîd ibn Zam'ah ibn al-Aswad. He was a nobleman of Quraysh who was consulted on all affairs. Embraced islam early and migrated to Abyssinia —*'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V, p. 110.

Banû Zuhrah:

(61) 'Âmir ibn 'Abî Waqqâṣ (Brother of Sa'd ibn Abî Waqqaṣ, no. 17 above). According to Al-Wâqidî he embraced Islam after only 10 people and the passage Q. 29:8 was revealed with reference to him. According to Al-Balâdhurî, 'Âmir joined the second migration to Abyssinia. — *Al-'Iṣabâh,* II, p. 257, no. 4423.

(62) Ṭulayb ibn Azhar (brother of Al-Muṭṭalib ibn Azhar, no. 19 above). Embraced Islam early, along with his brother, and migrated to Abyssinia where they died — *Al-'Iṣâbah*, II, p. 233, no. 4285; *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, III, p. 64.

(63) 'Abd Allah ibn Shihâb (Maternal grandfather of Imâm al-Zuhrî). Embraced Islam early and migrated to Abyssinia. —*'Usd al-Ghâbah*, III, P. 184; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, II, P. 325, no. 4752.

Confederates of Banû Zuhrah:

(64) 'Utbah ibn Mas'ûd (brother of 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ûd, no. 21 above). Embraced Islam early and went to Abyssinia on the second migration —*'Usd al-Ghâbah*, III, pp. 366-367; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, II, p. 456, no. 5414.

(65) Miqdâd ibn 'Amr al-Kindî. Embraced Islam very early (وهو قديم الإسلام من السابقين) and migrated to Abyssinia. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, IV, pp. 409-411.

(66) Shuraḥbîl ibn Ḥasanah al-Kindî. Embraced Islam early, migrated to Abyssinia, and subsequently to Madina. — *Al-'Iṣâbah*, II, p. 143, no. 3869. *'Usd al-Ghâbah,* II, p. 391. See also nos. 73-76 below).

Banû 'Adiyy:

(67) Zayd ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (consanguine brother of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb). Embraced Islam early. When Zayd died in the battle of Yamâmah 'Umar remarked that his brother had preceded him in respect of two good things — acceptance of Islam and attainment of martyrdom. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, II, pp. 238-239.

(68) Laylâ bint 'Abî Ḥathmah (Wife of 'Âmir ibn Rabî'ah al-'Anzî, no. 26 above). Embraced Islam early and migrated to Abyssinia with her husband and subsequently to Madina. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb, before his conversion, used to oppress them on account of Islam. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V, pp. 541.

(69) Ma'mar ibn 'Abd Allâh ibn Naḍlah. Embraced Islam very early and went to Abyssinia on the second migration and migrated to Madina at a very late date. — *'Usd al-Gâbah*, IV, p. 400.

(70) 'Adiyy ibn Naḍlah. Embraced Islam early and migrated with his son Nu'mân to Abyssinia. 'Adiyy died in Abyssinia and was succeeded by his son, this being the first case of succession in Islam where both the deceased and the successor were Muslims.— *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, III, p. 398; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, II, p. 471, no. 5491.

(71) Nu'mân ibn 'Adiyy ibn Naḍlah. Embraced Islam early and migrated with his father (no 70 above) and succeeded him on his death — *Ibid.*; also *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V, pp. 26-27.

(72) 'Urwah ibn 'Uthâthah (uterine brother of 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ). Embraced Islam very early and migrated to Abyssinia. — *Ibid.*, III, pp. 402-403.

Banû Jumaḥ:

(73) Sufyân ibn Ma'mar ibn Ḥabîb. Embraced Islam early and migrated to Abyssinia with his wife Ḥasanah and their sons Jâbir and Junâdah. —*'Usd al Ghâbah*, II, pp. 321-322; *Al-'Iṣâbah*,II., p. 57, no. 3329.

(74) Ḥasanah ('Umm Shuraḥbîl). Embraced Islam early and migrated to Abyssinia with her husband and sons. *Ibid.*; also *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V, p. 425.

(75) Jâbir ibn Sufyân (better known as Jâbir ibn Ḥasanah al-Kindî). Embraced Islam early and migrated to Abyssinia with his parents.—*'Usd al-Ghâbah*, I, p .253; II, pp. 321-322; 391; *Al-'Iṣâbah,* I, p. 211, no. 1016; II., p.143 no. 3869.

(76) Junâdah ibn Sufyân (better known as Junâdah ibn Ḥasanah al-Kindî). Embraced Islam early and migrated to Abyssinia with his parents and brother. *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, I, p. 299; *Al-'Iṣâbah* I, p. 246, no. 1205 and the references given under nos. 73-75 above.

(77) Nubayh ibn 'Uthmân ibn Rabî'ah ibn Wahb. Embraced Islam very early and, according to Al-Waqidî, migrated to Abyssinia. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V, p.15; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, III, p. 552, no. 8686.

Banû 'Abd al-Dâr:

(78) Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr ibn Hâshim ibn 'Abd Manâf ibn 'Abd al-Dâr. Embraced Islam very early and kept it concealed but was detected by his parents who confined him in the house. He managed to escape and migrated to Abyssinia on the first occasion. It was he whom the Prophet sent to Madina after the first oath of Al-'Aqabah to instruct the *anṣâr* in the Qur'ân. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, IV, pp. 368-370; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, III, p. 421, no. 8002.

(79) 'Abû al-Rûm ibn 'Umayr (brother of the above). Embraced Islam very early and migrated to Abyssinia with his brother. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V, p.194.

(80) Firâs ibn al-Naḍr ibn al-Ḥârith. Embraced Islam early and, according to Ibn Isḥâq, migrated to Abyssinia. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 177.

(80a) Jahm ibn Qays ibn 'Abd ibn Shurahbîl. Embraced Islam early and according to Ibn Isḥâq migrated to Abyssinia. *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, I, p. 311, 312; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, I, p. 254, no.1248.

Banû Sahm:

(81) 'Abd Allâh ibn Ḥudhâfah ibn Qays ibn 'Adiyy (brother of no. 42 above). Embraced Islam very early and migrated to Abyssinia on the second occasion with his brother Qays ibn Ḥudhâfah — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, III., pp.142-143; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, II, p. 296, no. 4622.

(82) Qays ibn Ḥudhâfah (brother of the above). Embraced Islam very early and migrated with his brother to Abyssinia. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, IV, p. 211.

(83) 'Abû Qays ibn al-Ḥârith ibn Qays ibn 'Adiyy. Embraced Islam very early and migrated to Abyssinia. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah,* V, pp. 279-280.

(84) 'Abd Allah ibn al-Ḥârith ibn Qays ibn 'Adiyy (brother of the above). Embraced Islam early and migrated to Abyssinia. *Al-'Iṣâbah*, II, p. 292 no. 4605.

(85) Al-Sâ'ib ibn al-Ḥârith ibn Qays ibn 'Adiyy (brother of the above). Embraced Islam very early and migrated to Abyssinia. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9, no. 3058.

(86) Al-Ḥajjâj ibn al-Ḥârith ibn Qays ibn 'Adiyy (brother of the above). Embraced Islam early and migrated to Abyssinia. — *Ibid.*, I., 311, no. 1615.

(87) Sa'îd ibn al-Ḥârith ibn Qays ibn 'Adiyy (brother of the above). Embraced Islam early and migrated to Abyssimia. — *Ibid.*, II, p. 44, no. 3251.

(88) Bishr ibn al-Ḥârith ibn Qays ibn 'Adiyy. Migrated to Abyssinia. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, I, pp.184-185

(89) Hishâm ibn al-'Âṣ ibn Wâ'il (younger brother of 'Amr ibn al-'Aṣ). Embraced Islam early and migrated to Abyssinia. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah,* V, pp. 63-64.

Confederates of Banû Sahm:

(90) 'Umayr ibn Ri'âb. Embraced Islam very early and migrated to Abyssinia. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, IV, p.143; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, III, pp. 31-32, no.6032.

(91) Maḥmiyyah ibn Jaz'u (uterine brother of 'Abbâs ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's wife 'Umm al-Faḍl). Embraced Islam very early and migrated to Abyssinia.-- *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, IV, p. 334; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, III, p.388, no. 7823.

Banû Makhzûm:

(92) Hishâm (or Hâshim) ibn 'Abî Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Mughîrah. Embraced Islam very early and migrated to Abyssinia. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V,

pp. 60-61; *Al-'Iṣabâh*, III, p. 603, no. 8962. See also no. 8910, *ibid.*, p. 593.

(93) Habbâr ibn Sufyân ibn 'Abd al-Asad. Embraced Islan very early and migrated to Abyssinia. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V, p. 54; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, III., p. 599, no. 8930.

(94) 'Abd Allâh ibn Sufyân ibn 'Abd al-Asad (brother of the above). Embraced Islam early and migrated to Abyssinia. — *Al-'Iṣâbah*, II, p. 319, no. 4721.

(95) 'Umm Salamah bint Abî 'Umayyah ibn al-Mughîrah (*'Umm al-Mu'minîn*). Embraced Islam very early and migrated with her first husband, 'Abû Salamah ibn 'Abd al-Asad, to Abyssinia. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V., pp. 588-590; *Al-'Iṣâbah,* IV, pp. 458-460, no. 1309 (*Kitâb al-Nisâ'*).

(96) Salamah ibn Hishâm ibn al-Mughîrah (brother of 'Abû Jahl and paternal cousin of Khâlid ibn al-Walîd). Embraced Islam early and migrated to Abyssinia. On his return from there his relatives tortured him, imprisoned him and prevented him from migrating to Madina. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, II, p.341; *Al-'Iṣâbah,* II., pp. 68-69, no. 3403.

Confederates of Banû Makhzûm:

(97) Yâsir (father of 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir, no.47 above, and *ḥalîf* of 'Abû Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Mughîrah). Embraced Islam very early and was very severely tortured on that account. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V, p. 98; also IV, p. 43ff; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, III., pp. 647-648, no. 9208.

(99) 'Abd Allah ibn Yâsir (son of the above). Embraced Islam early and was tortured severely. Both he and his father succumbed to the torture. *Ibid.*

Banû 'Âmir ibn Lu'ayy:

(100) 'Abû Sabrah ibn 'Abî Ruhm (The Prophet's paternal aunt Barrah bint 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's son). Embraced Islam early and migrated to both Abyssinia and Madina. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V, p. 207; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, IV, p. 84, no. 500 (*Kitâb al-Kunâ*).

(101) 'Umm Kulthûm bint Suhayl ibn 'Amr (wife of the above and daughter of the prominent Quraysh noble and chief Suhayl ibn 'Amr). Embraced Islam early and migrated with her husband to Abys-

sinia. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V, p.613; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, IV., p. 490, no.1473 (*Kitâb al-Nisâ'*).

(102) 'Abd Allah ibn Suhayl ibn 'Amr (brother of the above and of 'Abû Jandal). Embraced Islam early and migrated to Abyssimia.— *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, III., p.181; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, II, p. 322, no. 5736.

(103) 'Abû Jandal ibn Suhayl ibn 'Amr (brother of the above). Embraced Islam early and was on that account tortured by his family. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V., p.160; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, IV, p. 34, no. 203 (*Kitab al-Kuna*)

(104) Sakrân ibn 'Amr (brother of Suhayl ibn 'Amr and Ḥâṭib ibn 'Amr, no. 49 above, and first husband of *'Umm al-Mu'minîn* Sawdah bint Zam'ah. Embraced Islam early and migrated with his wife to Abyssinia. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah* II, pp. 324-325; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, II., p. 59, no. 3337.

(105) Sawdah bint Zam'ah (*'Umm al-Mu'minîn*, previously wife of the above). Embraced Islam early and migrated with her first husband to Abyssinia. — *Ibid*; also *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V, pp. 485-485; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, IV, pp. 338-339, no. 606 (*Kitâb al-Nisâ'*)

(106) Yaqaẓah bint 'Alqamah (wife of Salîṭ ibn 'Amr, no.48 above, brother of Suhayl ibn 'Amr). Embraced Islam early and migrated to Abyssinia with her hushand. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah* V, pp. 625-626.

(107) Mâlik ibn Zam'ah (*'Umm al-Mu'mimîn* Sawdah's brother). Embraced Islam early and migrated to Abyssinia with his wife 'Amrah bint al-Sa'dî. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, IV., p.280; Ibn Hishâm, 329.

(108) 'Amrah bint al-Sa'dî (wife of the above). Embraced Islam early and migrated with her husband to Abyssinia. *Ibid.*; also *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V, p. 510.

(109) Ibn 'Umm Maktûm ('Amr ibn 'Umm Maktûm, maternal cousin of *'Umm al-Mu'minîn* Khadîjah). Embraced Islam early and subsequently migrated to Madina. *Al-'Iṣâbah*, II, 523-824, no. 5764.

Banû Fihr ibn Mâlik:

(110) Suhayl ibn Bayḍâ'. Embraced Islam early and migrated to Abyssinia and also to Madina. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, II, p.370; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, II,

p. 91, no. 3561.

(111) Sa'îd ibn 'Abd Qays. Embraced Islam early and migrated to Abyssinia. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, II, p.312; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, II, p. 49, No. 3272.

(112) 'Amr ibn al-Ḥârith ibn Zuhayr. Embraced Islam early and, according to Ibn Isḥâq, migrated to Abyssinia. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, IV, p. 95; *Al-'Iṣâbah* II, p. 530, no. 5799.

(113) 'Uthmân ibn 'Abd Ghanm ibn Zuhayr (son of 'Abd al-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf's paternal aunt). Embraced Islam early and migrated to Abyssinia. *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, III, p. 375; *Al-'Iṣâbah*, II, p. 461, no. 5444.

Banû 'Abd ibn Quṣayy:

(114) Ṭulayb ibn 'Umayr ibn Wahb (The Prophet's paternal aunt 'Arwah bint 'Abd al-Muṯṯalib's son). Embraced Islam early and migrated to Abyssinia. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, III, p,65; *Al-'Iṣâbah* II, p. 233, no. 4288.

Slaves and others:

(115) Bilâl ibn Rabâḥ (slave to 'Umayyah ibn Khalaf). Embraced Islam very early and was severely tortured on that account. According to one report, Bilâl was one of the first seven persons, including the Messenger of Allah, to publicly announce their conversion. The other five were 'Abu Bakr, Ṣuhayb. 'Ammâr, Khabbâb and Sumayyah—Ibn Hishâm, 317-318; Ibn Sa'd, III, 232-233; *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, I, pp. 206-209.

(116) Sumayyah (slave maid to 'Abû Ḥudhayfah and 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir's mother). She embraced Islam along with her husband and sons, was inhumanly tortured and ultimately killed by Abû Jahl. She is the first lady martyr in Islam. — Ibn Hishâm, 319-320; Ibn Sa'd, III., pp.233,246-249; *'Usd al-Ghâbah* V, pp. 481-482.

(117) Ḥamâmah (Bilâl's mother). Embraced Islam early and was tortured on that account. *Al-'Istî'âb*, IV, p. 1813, no. 3301.

(118) 'Abû Fukayhah (slave to Banû 'Abd al-Dâr). Embraced Islam and was therefore persecuted. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V, p.273.

(119) 'Âmir ibn Fuhayrah (slave to Ṭufayl ibn al-Ḥârith). Embraced Islam early and was persecuted. — Ibn Hishâm, p. 318; *'Usd al-Ghâbh*, III, pp. 90-91.

(120) Lubaynah or Lubaybah. Ibn Hishâm mentions her as a slave maid to Banû Mu'ammal. Embraced Islam early and was persecuted, particularly by 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb before his conversion. — Ibn Hishâm, 319.

(121) 'Umm 'Ubays (slave maid to Banû Zuhrah or Banû Taym). Embraced Islam very early and was persecuted on that account. — Ibn Hishâm, p. 318; *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V, 601.

(122) Zannîrah al-Rûmiyyah (slave maid to Banû 'Adiyy or Banû Makhzûm). Embraced Islam very early and suffered persecution. — Ibn Hishâm p. 318; *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V, 462.

(123) Nahdiyyah and her daughter (slave maid to Banû 'Abd al-Dâr). Embraced Islam very early and suffered persecution. — Ibn Hishâm, pp. 318-319.

(124) 'Umm 'Ayman Barakah bint Tha'labah (family-maid of the Messenger of Allah). Embraced Islam very early and migrated to both Abyssinia and Madina. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, V, p. 567.

(125) Miḥjan ibn al-'Adra' al-Aslamî. Embraced Islam early. — *Al-'Iṣâbah*, III, pp.366-367, no. 7738.

(126) Mas'ûd ibn Rabî'ah ibn 'Amr (of Banû al-Hûn ibn Khuzaymah). Embraced Islam very early, before the Prophet's entry into the Dâr al-Arqam. — *'Usd al-Ghâbah*, IV, p. 357.

CHAPTER XXII
MARGOLIOUTH'S THEORY OF "ISLAM AS A SECRET SOCIETY"

Apart from the question of their views regarding *waḥy,* the orientalist's assumptions regarding the early phase of the mission revolve mainly round three other themes, namely, (a) the period of the so-called "secret preaching"; (b) the character and motives of the early converts and (c) the contents and teachings of the early revelations.

It may be recalled that Ibn Isḥâq speaks of the Prophet's having initially conducted his preachings "secretly". We have already examined this statement of his and have shown that in the light of the other facts mentioned by him in this connection and also in the light of the Qur'ânic evidence it means personal contacts and individual approaches rather than an attempt on the Prophet's part to keep his mission a "secret" to himself and his followers.[1] This sense of Ibn Isḥâq's statement is at least rightly understood by Muir who states categorically that there is hardly any ground to "assign to the Prophet three years of secret preaching and private solicitation". Muir observes that for "some succeeding period" after the Prophet had received his call "his efforts would be naturally directed to individual persuasion and entreaty, but there is nothing to warrant the belief that the Prophetic claim, once assumed, was ever confined as an esoteric creed within the limits of a narrow circle." He further observes that after the short period of individual persuasion the Prophet received the command "to rise and preach" and forthwith "his appeal was made to the whole community of Mecca."[2]

Similarly Muir generally accepts what the sources say about the early converts, their character and reasons for conversion. He also points out that they were mostly the Prophet's relatives and close firends.[3] On the basis of this latter fact Muir observes: "It is strongly corroborative of Mahomet's sincerity that the earliest converts to Islam were not only of upright character, but his own bosom friends and people of his household; who, being intimately acquainted with his private life, could not fail otherwise to have detected those discrepancies which ever more or less exist between the pro-

1. *Supra*, pp. 516-517.
2. Muir, *The life of Mahomet*, 3rd edn, 60.
3. *Ibid.*, 56-59.

fessions of the hypocritic deceiver abroad and his actions at home."[1] In making this observation Muir actually supports Sprenger's inference which he acknowledges a little later on as follows: "I agree with Sprenger in considering 'the faith of Abu Bekr the greatest guarantee of the sincerity of Mohammed in the beginning of his career' — and, indeed, in a modified sense, throughout his life."[2]

In sharp contrast with these views are those of Margoliouth. His entire approach is geared to showing that the Prophet was a deceiver and imposter who, being ambitious and a cool judge of human character, made calculated preparations for playing the role of a Prophet and, for that purpose, pretended the receipt of revelations from God. Proceeding from that premise Margoliouth twists the sense of Ibn Isḥâq's statement and builds up a theory of a "secret society", saying that at the age of forty Muḥammad (ﷺ) placed himself at the head of a secret society.[3] Indeed Margoliouth captions his chapter on the early phase of the Prophet's mission as "Islam as a secret society".[4] And to bring home this theme he not only makes tendentious remarks about the form, manner and matter of the revelations but imputes ulterior motives to almost everyone of the earliest converts, twisting the facts to support and sustain his theory.

I. THE INNUENDO AGAINST 'ABÛ BAKR

To begin with, Margoliouth takes up the fact of 'Abû Bakr's being one of the very earliest converts and his role in winning over a few others to the cause of Islam. Margoliouth states that "in his thirty-ninth year Mohammed became acquainted or became intimate with Abu Bakr". The latter, it is said, in spite of his "business ability", "considerable fortune", kindly and complaisant disposition and "charming manners" which made "his company much sought after" by the Makkans, was nonetheless a "hero-worshipper, if there was one", possessing "a quality common in women, but sometimes present in men, i.e., readiness to follow the fortunes of someone else with complete and blind devotion, never questioning or looking back".[5] Margoliouth further says that the Prophet, being a shrewd judge of man, perceived this quality of 'Abû Bakr's and used it. Hence, when the latter's call

1. *Ibid.*, 54.
2. *Ibid.*, 56, n.
3. Margoliouth, *Mohammed*, 3rd edn., p. 72.
4. *Ibid.*, Ch. III.
5. *Ibid.*, 83.

came "a year after their intimacy had begun" the proselytising was done "not by Mohammed but by Abu Bakr."[1] Margoliouth asserts that Muḥammad (ﷺ) thus assumed the role of "a medium"[2] professing to produce messages from another world and this was made possible "due to the receptivity of Abu Bakr".[3]

Before proceeding further with Margoliouth's other remarks in this connection it would be worthwhile to point out the untenability of the above mentioned statements. He does not cite any authoirty to support the assertion that it was only a year before his call that the Prophet became acquainted or intimate with 'Abû Bakr. The sources indicate, howeever, that the two were intimate with each other since their boyhood. Even according to common sense it is highly unlikely that the two should have remained unknown to each other for so long a time as nearly 37 years,[4] in view of the fact that they both lived in the same quarter of the then very small town of Makka and in a society where each person saw a good deal of the other. Margoliouth's statement is also inconsistent with what he acknowledges to be 'Abû Bakr's distinctive quality, namely, his "charming manners" which made his company "much sought after" by his people. Evidently such a man could not have remained unacquainted with one of his own locality who, at least five years prior to his claim to prophethood, had acted as an arbitartor in the famous dispute arising out of the rebuilding of the Ka'ba.

The reason given by Margoliouth for 'Abû Bakr's acceptance of Islam, namely, his being simply a hero worshipper ready to follow the fortunes of someone else is totally conjectural and inapplicable here; for the simple fact that at the very inception of his mission neither was there any particular development marking the Prophet out to be a hero nor did fortune smile on him in any way. It therefore remains to be explained why an individual with 'Abû Bakr's business acumen should have recognized a hero in the Prophet before he even gained a single convert to his cause and before fortune took any turn in favour of him. After all, 'Abû Bakr had hitherto been no less wealthy and no less known in his society than the Prophet.

1. *Ibid.*, 83-84.

2. *Ibid.*, 84. It is to be noted that virtually following Margoliouth in such characterization of the Prophet, Maxime Rodinson calls him a "megaphone" and Bell calls him a "mouthpiece" of God (*T.G.U.O.S*, VII, 22).

3. *Ibid.*,

4. The two were almost of equal age, 'Abû Bakr being two years junior to the Prophet.

Margoliouth seems to suggest that 'Abû Bakr was the very first person to believe in the Prophet. This is celarly at variance with the unanimous statement of all the reports that Khadîjah (r.a.) was the first person to believe in the Prophet. Margoliouth skips over the question of the first convert by providing a sort of a back-door foot-note stating: "Nöldeke, *Z.D.M.G.*, lii,16-21, makes the order of converts Khadijah, Zaid, Ali, some slaves, Sa'd, son of Abu Wakkas, and Abu Bakr, with other Kurashites."[1] It must at once be pointed out that it is not Nöldeke, but the sources, which unanimously mention Khadîjah (r.a.) as the first convert. The reports of course differ regarding the order of conversion of the other persons mentioned, particularly Zayd, 'Alî and 'Abû Bakr. This difference in the reports rather highlights the fact that in so far as Zayd and 'Alî were concerned 'Abû Bakr had no hand in their conversion. Nöldeke's "order" assigns the eighth or so place to 'Abû Bakr. Margoliouth does not give any reason for his regarding 'Abû Bakr an earlier or rather the earliest convert to Islam. The sources indicate that only four or five persons were converted at the instance of 'Abû Bakr. The other early converts, whose number was about ten times that figure, embraced Islam either in consequence of their own enquiries or as a result of the Prophet's preachings to them. Margoliouth himself recogniszes that there were at least some one hundred converts before the commencement of what he calls "publicity".[2] As will be seen presently, in spite of his twisting of various facts Margoliouth is unable to establish 'Abû Bakr's connection with the conversion of even ten persons. Hence nothing could be a worse exaggeration than the assertion that the Prophet's assumption of what is called the "role of a medium" was due to the receptivity of 'Abû Bakr or that the work of "proselytising" was done mainly by 'Abû Bakr.

In spite of his misleading statement about 'Abû Bakr and the commencement of the mission Margoliouth could not ignore the position of Khadîjah (r.a.) and the absence of 'Abû Bakr's role in her conversion. But as usual Margoliouth twists and misinterprets the facts in her case too. He does not accept as historical the incident of her meeting Waraqah ibn Nawfal after her husband's receipt of the revelation. Nevertheless Margoliouth asserts that her mind might "have been prepared by her cousin's speculations and studies for a revolt from the Meccan religion."[3] Having said so Margoliouth suggests

1. Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, p. 89, n.
2. *Ibid.*,112.
3. *Ibid.*,93.

that "maternal grief over her dead sons" was a factor in the process of her conversion.[1] To substantiate this assertion he cites a tradition[2] in which she is reported to have asked the Prophet whether their dead children were in hell. "To this question", writes Margoliouth, "the Prophet in reply produced a revelation: 'And whoso believe and are followed by their seed in faith unto them shall we attach their seed.'[3] A brilliant answer; since thereby the bereaved mother was assured that the eternal happiness of her dead sons was made conditional on her believing; .... No wonder Khadijah devoted herself heart and soul to the mission, and received the promise of a very special place in paradise."[4]

The incorrectness and anachronism in the above statements of Margoliouth are too obvious. He rejects the fact of Khadîjah's (r.a.) meeting with Waraqah; yet the inference about the latter's influence upon her is based on the account of that very meeting; for there is no other report which makes even the slightest allusion to her ever coming in contact with him or even to his having embraced or possessed a knowledge of Christianity. If his studies and speculations prepared her mind for a revolt against Makkan religion, as Margoliouth would have us believe, it would be only natural on her part to consult him as soon as her husband spoke to her about the receipt of revelation. Secondly, it is totally anachronistic to suggest that "maternal grief over her dead sons" entered the process of her conversion. Her reported conversation with the Prophet regarding their dead sons and the revelation of the passage (52:21) in question were both long subsequent to her conversion and support for the Prophet. Thirdly, Margoliouth grossly misinterprets the passage 52:21. It does in no way make salvation of the "seed" dependent upon the parents' faith. Even according to Margoliouth's own translation of the passage, the "seed" also must "follow" their parents "in faith". In fact the passage in question only emphasizes individual accountability and its last clause, which Margoliouth does not reproduce, unequivocally stated: "Every person is a pledge for his own deeds".[5]

Margoliouth in effect contradicts his innuendo only a few lines later on

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Musnad*, VI, 68.
3. Q. 52:21.
4. Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, 93-94, citing *Musnad*, IV, 356.
5. The last clause of the *'âyah* 52:21 runs thus: ﴿كل امرئ بما كسب رهين﴾

where, referring to the incident of *fatrah* (pause in the coming of *waḥy*) and Khadîjah's (r.a.) having consoled the Prophet, it is said that "the strong-minded woman" compelled her husband "to adhere to the line which he had taken".[1] Clearly Margoliouth does not see that if Waraqah's studies and speculations had prepared her mind for a revolt against the Makkan religion and if she had already been so strongly convinced of the truth of the mission that she "compelled" or persuaded her husband to carry on, there is no need to invoke her grief over her dead sons and the Prophet's alleged assurances of eternal happiness for them as a reason for her believing!

In making the above mentioned statement about Khadîjqh's (r.a.) role Margoliouth appears to have realized that it is somewhat inconsistent with his theory about 'Abû Bakr's role. Hence he hastens to add: "But indeed he [the Prophet] was compelled to continue by 'Abû Bakr who immediately started proselytising."[2] It must be pointed out that the Prophet was *not compelled* to continue his work by anyone, neither by Khadîjah nor by 'Abû Bakr (r.a.). Nor could there be any question of the Prophet's having persisted in his mission simply because of the alleged conversions made by 'Abû Bakr; for, even according to Margoliouth, "the first year of 'Abû Bakr's propaganda produced three converts."[3] Clearly, this was no encouraging number nor any compelling ground for any person to persevere in his mission. The inherent contradiction in Margoliouth's approach is that he proceeds from the premise of the Prophet's ambition and calculated plans to play the role of a messenger of God but here it is suggested that the latter was compelled to carry on his work mainly because of the "receptivity" of 'Abû Bakr and his proselytising work. It is also pertinent to ask, if 'Abû Bakr was credulous and a hero worshipper ready to follow the fortunes of someone, why the others should have succumbed to his "propaganda"? Were they also similarly hero worshippers ready to follow someone's fortune?

A clearer refutation of Margoliouth's theory lies, however, in what he actually cites as the instances of conversion made by 'Abû Bakr. Margoliouth states that at the Prophet's desire 'Abû Bakr conducted his propaganda "with profound secrecy" and that "from the first" he was helped by an Abyssinian slave, Bilâl, who was, in Margoliouth's word, the "third"

1. Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, 95.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*

convert to Islam and to whom might be attributed "some of the Abyssinian elements" in the Prophet's productions. Bilâl was "after a time purchased and manumitted by 'Abû Bakr".[1]

Here Margoliouth makes a number of misstatements. It is not an established fact that Bilâl was the third convert to Islam, nor is it at all true that the so-called Abyssinian elements in the Qur'ân had their origin in Bilâl. Most important of all, his conversion was no "secret" affair. On the contrary, it was because of his open profession of Islam and the resultant inhuman persecution inflicted upon him by his master that moved the Prophet and 'Abû Bakr and led to his purchase and manumission by the latter.[2] Margoliouth clearly misleads his readers when he cites Bilâl's case by way of showing 'Abû Bakr's "secret" proselytising work. The incidents of persecution of Bilâl, who was undoubtedly one of the very earliest converts, and his consequent purchase and manumission by 'Abû Bakr, were not and could not have been matters of what is called "profound secrecy". They rather decisively belie and explode the theory of secret proselytisation.

II. THE IMPUTATION AGAINST 'UTHMÂN IBN 'AFFÂN (R.A.) AND OTHERS

Thus having dealt with what Margoliouth calls the third convert to Islam, he takes up the case of 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân (r.a.). Margoliouth says that the latter loved the Prophet's fair daughter Ruqayyah (r.a.) and "learned to his chagrin that she had been betrothed to another." He therefore poured his grief into the firendly ears of 'Abû Bakr whose conversation, states Margoliouth, gave him hope that the Prophet's daughter could still be his if only he acknowledged the latter's mission. The Prophet presently passed by. "Abu Bakr whispered something into his ear and the affair was arranged. Othman became a believer and Rukayyah became his wife."[3]

It is of course a fact that the Prophet's two daughters, Ruqayyah and 'Umm Kulthûm (r.a.) had before his call to Prophethood been betrothed respectively to two sons of 'Abû Lahab, his uncle. It is also a fact that subsequently, after the break-up of that engagement, both the daughters were successively married to 'Uthmân (r.a.), one after the death of the other. Margoliouth grossly twists these facts to build up his story about 'Uthmân's

1. *Ibid.*, 95-96.
2. See Ibn Hishâm, I, 317-319.
3. Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, 97.

conversion and thus attempts, at one stroke, to castigate the character of all the three persons involved. Margoliouth of course does not cite any source for this story of his simply because he could lay his hand on none. But apart from the question of source the bare elements of the story and common sense belie Margoliouth's innuendo. 'Uthmân (r.a.) was of course converted at 'Abû Bakr's instance and that also in the first year of the mission. But the engagement of the Prophet's daughters with 'Abû Lahab's sons was broken up in the third or fourth year of the mission, and that also not at all at the Prophet's desire but solely at the instance of 'Abû Lahab and his wife 'Umm Jamîl who by then had turned deadly against him on account of his mission. It is also to be noted that 'Abû Lahab broke the engagement not of Ruqayyah (r.a.) alone but of the other daughter of the Prophet too. At the initial stage of his mission the Prophet was naturally eager to have his own kith and kin solidly behind him. It is thus simply unreasonable to assume that he would at that stage contemplate taking such a step as was sure to create disruption and division within his own clan and family and to alienate his own uncle 'Abû Lahab who till that time had obviously shown no hostility towards him. The unwisdom of the alleged attempt would have been obvious to any person with an iota of common sense; for the alleged step would have at the most gained the adhesion of only one individual at the cost of the sure estrangement and hostility of an uncle and an influential family of his own clan. No reasonable person would have failed to see the net loss in the alleged deal.

Again, 'Uthmân belonged to the sister clan of 'Abd Shams which, like Banû Hâshim, was from among the sons of 'Abd Manâf. Also 'Uthmân's maternal grandmother, Bayḍâ', daughter of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, was the Prophet's paternal aunt. Hence 'Uthmân was no stranger to the Prophet's family. If, therefore, he was fascinated by Ruqayyah (r.a.) he could easily have proposed to marry her instead of waiting to see her betrothed to another person and then to disclose the suppressed fascination to 'Abû Bakr. The utter falsehood of the story is highlighted by the dramatic touch given by Margoliouth to it. It is stated that while 'Uthmân was thus disclosing his secret to 'Abû Bakr (r.a.) the Prophet "presently passed by", "Abu Bakr whispered something into his ear and the affair was arranged". As if the Prophet was passing by with a ready intention to break the engagement of his daughters so that he gave an instant decision regarding so serious a matter without hesiatating to consider the pros and cons of the step, its con-

sequences upon the happiness of his daughters, upon his own mission and upon his relationship with his own uncle and family who had admittedly not yet shown any hostility towards him. Last but not least, if a promise of getting the hand of Ruqqyyah was 'Uthmân's (r.a.) sole consideration for conversion, why should he have waited for three years or so to have that promise fulfilled?

After having fabricated this absurd story about 'Uthmân's conversion Margoliouth deals one by one with the conversion of ten other persons, namely, (1) Khâlid ibn Sa'îd, (2) 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ûd, (3) 'Uthmân ibn Maẓ'ûn, (4) Sa'îd ibn Zayd ibn 'Amr ibn Nufayl, (5) 'Abd al-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf, (6) Miqdâd, (7) 'Utbah ibn Ghazwân, (8) Al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm (9) Sa'd ibn 'Abî Waqqâṣ and (10) Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubayd Allah.[1] Of these persons nos. 5, 8, 9 and 10 were no doubt converted at 'Abû Bakr's instance. No.1, Khâlid ibn Sa'îd may also be included in that group. The rest, however, cannot be regarded as 'Abû Bakr's converts even according to the facts mentioned by Margoliouth himself. Thus with regard to no. 2., 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ûd, the tradition cited simply shows that he met the Prophet when the latter was going to some place accompanied by 'Abû Bakr. The meeting of course led to 'Abd Allah's conversion; but no special credit goes to 'Abû Bakr simply because he was with the Prophet at the time of the meeting. Nor does the tradition suggest that 'Abû Bakr took the Prophet there and introduced 'Abd Allah to him. Similarly the tradition cited in connection with no. 3., 'Uthmân ibn Maẓ'ûn, says that he came one day to sit with the Prophet and there accepted Islam after some conversation.[2] There is no mention of 'Abû Bakr at all in connection with 'Uthmân ibn Maẓ'ûn's conversion. Regarding no. 4, Sa'îd ibn Zayd ibn 'Amr ibn Nufayl, Margoliouth himself notes that though dissatisfaction with pagan beliefs might have led Zayd to Islam, "he is not reckoned among 'Abû Bakr's proselytes."[3] With regard to nos. 6 and 7 (Miqdâd and 'Utbah) the facts mentioned by Margoliouth do in no way indicate 'Abû Bakr's connection with their conversion.[4] Thus the instances and facts cited by Margoliouth show that not more than ten persons at the most were converted at 'Abû Bakr's instance. This number, as already indicated, was only a fraction of the total number of the early con-

1. *Ibid.*, 98-99.
2. *Ibid.*, 99 (citing Musnad I, 318).
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, 99-100

verts. Nor do these instances sustain the theory of a secret propaganda drive conducted by 'Abû Bakr on behalf of the Prophet.

III. THE ALLEGED EVIDENCES OF SECRECY

To sustain the theory of a secret society Margoliouth advances a number of assumptions. For instance, he alludes to the famous remark of the Prophet that every person to whom Islam was presented at first expressed some hesitation and asked some questions about it excepting 'Abû Bakr who accepted it unhesitatingly and unquestioningly. Margoliouth interprets this statement of the Prophet as indicating that from the first the proselytes were required to undertake "some serious obligation, such as those who are admitted to secret societies undertake" and that the "repugnance" spoken of was due to the anxiety which the converts felt in committing themselves to something for life, "specially when that something is an unknown quantity, a course of which the issue is unknown".[1]

Needless to point out that this statement of Margoliouth is a pure conjecture without any evidence in its support. The hesitation spoken of by the Prophet was not due to the requirement to undertake any serious and unspecified obligation, of which there is no mention whatsoever in the sources, but simply to the usual heart-searchings on the part of any person who thinks of taking such a momentous step in his life as changing his religion. Margoliouth's own admission that the supposed obligation was unspecified falsifies the assumption that it was either "serious" or characteristic of a secret organization. For, it is manifestly absurd to characterize something as "serious" when there is no indication whatsoever of the nature and extent of that supposed something. Indeed, there is no mention in the sources that the converts were ever required to undertake any secret obligation. The only obligation was to believe in and worship the One Only God and, of course, to believe that Muḥammad (ﷺ) was His Messenger. Margoliouth's assumption is an obvious misinterpretation of a plain statement of the Prophet in appreciation of 'Abû Bakr's devotion and faith without any reflection on the others.

In the same strain and for the same purpose of bringing home the theme of "Islam as a secret society" Margoliouth states that *ṣalah* or prayer of the Muslims was performed in "strict privacy", their meetings "were fixed with

1. *Ibid.*, 101-102.

great caution"[1] and the Prophet "produced" revelations through the process of "mysterious seances" in the presenece of only the converts, excluding strangers from the scene.[2] It is further stated that the Prophet used to go into seclusion and "hiding places", such as hill-caves, in order to produce revelation.[3] "Moreover", states Margoliouth, "in the early period none were admitted to see the Prophet in the character of whom the missionary was not sure, and who had not been prepared to venerate."[4]

These remarks of Margoliouth suggest as if, after the receipt of revelation the Prophet had withdrawn himself from public view and conducted the work of gaining converts only through a secret agent! Anyone conversant with the facts knows that such was never the case. It was only at a subsequent stage when the Prophet's life was threatened by the Makkan opposition that his followers took care not to admit suspicious characters to his presence before taking prior steps for his safety. But neither then, nor earlier, did the Prophet remain out of public sight and approach, nor was he constantly guarded by his folllowers. Margoliouth's statement in this regard and also his statement relating to the Muslims' prayers and meetings seem to have reference to the situation when the Prophet took Dâr al-Arqam as the venue for meetings and prayers.[5] Indeed Margoliouth specifically refers to this fact a little afterwards[6] as yet another argument in support of his theory. The taking of Dâr-al-Arqam as the venue for prayer and meetings was the result of publicity and the consequent Makkan opposition to the mission. It was in no way a consequence of the secret and esoteric nature of the mission. As regards Margoliouth's remarks about the manner of the coming of revelation, it has already been dealt with eariler.[7] It may only be noted here that whatever might have been the manner, the fact and claim of the receipt of revelation by the Prophet was no secret thing, neither to the "proselytes" nor to the Makkan unbelievers.

A third assumption of Margoliouth's is that the Prophet, according to

1. *Ibid.*, 103.
2. *Ibid.*, 104-105.
3. *Ibid.*, 108.
4. *Ibid.*, 106.
5. See *supra*, p.519 and *infra,* p.652.
6. Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, 108.
7. *Supra*, pp. 410-422.

him, discouraged publicity. In support of this assumption Margoliouth cites the case of the conversion of 'Amr ibn 'Abasah. He is stated to have offered to join the Prophet openly, "but", says Margoliouth, "was forbidden to do so, since he would serve the cause better by returning to his own country".[1] The circumstances of 'Amr ibn 'Abasah's conversion have been related earlier.[2] The Prophet asked him not to declare his conversion at Makka in order to enable him to escape persecution at the hands of the Makkan unbelievers who did not distinguish between inhabitants of the city and visitors to it in this respect. In thus warning 'Amr the Prophet did not intend to keep the mission a secret. He had similarly asked 'Abû Dhar al-Ghifârî not to venture an open announcement of his change of faith at Makka. He disregarded the counsel of caution only to be severely manhandled by the unbelievers.[3] Such warnings given by the Prophet to converts from outside Makka and such assaults by the Makkans on those of the converts who disregarded the warnings only emphasize the undisguised nature of the mission. They were in no way symptomatic of a supposedly secret and esoteric organization.

Another highly prejudiced assertion of Margoliouth's is that the Prophet and 'Abû Bakr, according to him, used their wealth to retain their hold upon the converts by providing them "temporal relief". To substantiate this assertion Margoliouth refers to the Prophet's or rather the Qur'ân's declaration that he sought no material gains through his mission and "to the end", emphasizes Margoliouth, the Prophet "refused either to enjoy the Alms himself, or to allow any members of his family to enjoy them. The most successful of the mediums play this card".[4] Margoliouth further says that manumission of believers was declared to be a pious duty and 'Abû Bakr acted on that principle.[5] It is also alleged that several persons were lured into Islam by bribes.[6]

It is not surprising that Margoliouth would thus twist a fact which is one of the strongest proofs of the absence of any sordid motive on the Prophet's part in his mission to show that he used his wealth to further the cause of his

1. Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, 107-108.
2. *Supra*, pp. 536-537.
3. *Supra*, pp. 537-538.
4. Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, 113.
5. *Ibid.*, 109.
6. *Ibid.*, 114, citing *Musnad*, II, 212 and III, 175.

mission. But the reader is simply unable to see how even this twisting of the fact could be an evidence in support of the theory of a secret society. That 'Abû Bakr purchased and manumitted a number of slaves who had embraced Islam and had in consequence been subjected to the most inhuman persecution by their masters is well known. It is also true that several converts, who lost their trade and means of livelihood on account of their change of faith were supported and maintained not by the Prophet, nor by 'Abû Bakr only, but by other well-to-do converts. These were instances of mutual help and steps to rescue the weak and poor converts from persecution and death at the hands of the unbelievers. In any case they are in no way illustrative of a secret and esoteric organization. No person could have been subjected to persecution, nor would a trader or craftsman have incurred the hostility of their community and thus lose their custom unless their change of faith was known. Nor could the purchase and manumission of slaves in the then Makkan society be in any way a secret transaction.

More glaringly untrue is the allegation that some persons were lured into Islam by bribes. In support of this allegation Margoliouth cites *Musnad* III, 175 where a report by 'Anas (r.a.) occurs to the effect that one day a man came to the Prophet and begged him for some material help. He gave the man an entire flock of sheep then grazing between two hills. The man returned to his people and called upon them to accept Islam, adding that Muḥammad (ﷺ) was so generous that he bestowed like a person who did not care about the exhaustion of his wealth nor about his becoming poor thereby. 'Anas further says that even though sometimes a man accepted Islam out of sordid motives, not a day passed before his faith became dearer to him than all the wealth of the world.[1] Clearly, Margoliouth has sought support for his allegation from this report. In doing so he has either misunderstood or ignored the three obvious aspects of the report. In the first place, he ignores the fact that 'Anas gives this report of an incident which took place at Madina and at a very late stage in the Prphet's life, and not at Makka, not to speak of the period when he is alleged to have been acting as the chief of a secret society. For 'Anas was an inhabitant of Madina and was born only ten years

1. *Musnad*, III, 175. The text of the report runs as follows:

(حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا مؤمل ثنا حماد عن ثابت عن أنس أن رجلا أتى النبي ﷺ يسأله فأعطاه رسول الله ﷺ غنما بين جبلين فأتى الرجل قومه فقال أي قومي أسلموا فو الله إن محمدا ليعطي عطية رجل ما يخاف الفاقة أو قال الفقر قال وحدثنا ثابت قال: قال أنس إن كان الرجل ليأتي النبي ﷺ ما يريد إلا أن يصيب عرضا من الدنيا أو قال دنيا يصيبها فما يمسي من يومه ذلك حتى يكون دينه أحب إليه أو قال أكبر عليه من الدنيا وما فيها)

before the migration.[1] Secondly, the report clearly states that the Prophet's gift was made on the person's asking for help. The transaction was in no way even an indirect bribery, for it was neither secret nor made conditional on the recipient's or his peoples' acceptance of Islam. Nor does the report say that they became Muslims in consequence of that gift. Thirdly, lest there should be any confusion regarding the report 'Anas very clearly states that even if material considerations led a person to embrace Islam, he was soon a changed man and valued his faith far more than any earthly gain. Thus, far from giving an instance of the use of money for gaining converts the report merely emphasizes the Prophet's liberality on the one hand and the edifying influence of the faith on the other.

Even the fact of the convert's unflinching faith and refusal to recant under the severest persecution has been twisted by Margoliouth to seek evidence for his theory. Thus, referring to the rule which was laid down much subsequently and which prescribed death penalty for an apostate he says that this was the "ordinary rule of the secret society" which was "avowed" so "soon as Islam became strong" and that the fact that many a convert remained faithful under persecution points to the existence of the rule since the early stage of Islam.[2] Clearly, Margoliouth's proposition here contradicts his assumption. He admits that the rule in question was made or announced subsequently when Islam became strong. He does not explain why a supposed rule characteristic of a secret society should have been announced or avowed by Islam when it admittedly was neither a secret group nor understandably in need of it. It may also be noted that the viability of such a rule with reference to any organization depends upon its inherent strength; and efficacy of the rule depends upon its enforceability; for conformity to it is induced only by a fear generated by examples of its enforcement. In the early stage of Islam it was admittedly very weak; so it could neither make such a rule nor think of enforcing it. There is also no instance whatsoever of the application or an attempt at application of the supposed rule during the whole of the Makkan period though, according to Margoliouth, several persons are stated to have abandoned Islam after having embraced it.[3]

Thus Margoliouth's theory of "Islam as a secret society" is ill-conceived,

1. *Al-'Iṣâbah*, I, 71, no. 277.
2. Margoliouth, *op, cit.*, 114.
3. *Ibid.*, 89, 122.

ill-argued and untenable. As regards his views about revelation it has already been mentioned that he assumes that the Prophet feigned and practised seances to "produce" it and that its matter and contents were drawn from Jadaeo-Christian sources. The questions have already been dealt with, so they need not detain us here.[1] Margoliouth rightly observes, however, that from the very beginning the Prophet must have made a distinct departure from the prevailing ideas and practices of paganism and must have announced "some of the ordinances of Islam"; for, in Margoliouth's own words, "it is by no means sufficient to warn people of the terrors of the Day of Judgement; some answer must be given to the question, what shall I do to be saved? And that answer, in order that it may satisfy, must involve certain injunctions. There appear to have been commands to wash the clothes, and to avoid the idols".[2] Earlier Margoliouth states that "the distinctive features of Mohammed's teachings, as opposed to the ideas of paganism were from first to last the doctrine of a future life, and of the unity of God".[3]

1. *Supra*, ch. IX.
2. Margoliouth, *op, cit.*, 94. (The allusion is to Q. 74:4-5)
3. *Ibid.*, 88.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE BELL-WATT THEORY ABOUT THE CONTENTS OF EARLY REVELATIONS

Before making a survey of the early Muslims Watt deals with what he calls the "primary message". This he does in order to relate the teachings of the early Qur'ânic passages to the contemporary Makkan socio-economic situation and, on the basis of this "relevance to contemporary situation", to give a socio-economic interpretation of the rise of Islam in general and its acceptance by the early converts in particular. He differs sharply from Margoliouth who, as noted above, at least admits that from the very start the Prophet made a distinct departure from the prevailing ideas and practices of paganism and that the distinctive features of his teachings were, "from first to last the doctrine of future life, and that of the unity of God". Watt, however, would have us believe that the Prophet did neither make any distinct departure from pagan beliefs and practices nor did he clearly spell out monotheism. According to Watt, the Prophet at the beginning simply developed some vague ideas about monotheism but particularly stressed only the "goodnees" and "power" of God and man's duty of gratitude to Him. In advancing this theory Watt simply adopts and develops the view of his preceptor Bell who suggests that "to begin with" Muḥammad (ﷺ) did not "speak against the other gods but simply set forth the claims of Allah to gratitude".[1] The following is a summary of how Watt adopts and develops this view.

I. WATT'S IDENTIFICATION OF THE EARLY PASSAGES AND THEIR TEACHINGS

Watt divides his chapter on "The Primary Message"[2] into four sections. These are captioned respectively as "The Dating of the Qur'ân"[3], "The Contents of the Early Passages",[4] "The Relevance of the Message to the Contemporary Situation"[5] and "Further Reflections".[6] Excepting the first section

1. R. Bell, "The Beginning of Muḥammad's Religious Activity", *T.G.U.O.S.*, VII, 16-24, specially p. 20.
2. *M. at M.*, Chap. III, pp. 62-85.
3. *Ibid.*, 60-61.
4. *Ibid.*, 62-72.
5. *Ibid.*, 72-79.
6. *Ibid.* 79-85.

the other three sections are again divided into a number of sub-sections. These will be noticed as we proceed with our discussion.

In the first section, "The dating of the Qur'ân", Watt recalls the work of Theodore Nöldeke who, writing in the late nineteenth century, arranged the *sûrahs* in four periods, three Makkan and one Madinan, on the assumption that they were either earlier or later according as the *'âyahs* were shorter or longer. The "chief advance" upon that work, according to Watt, is that of Richard Bell. The latter, taking his cue from the fact that most *sûrahs* contain passages revealed at different times, split almost each and every *sûrah* into small passages according to his view of the unity and coherence of their themes and attempted to date them.[1] Watt bases his selection of the early passages on the conclusions of these two scholars saying that he has taken into account "those sûrahs or parts of sûrahs which are described both as 'first Meccan period'" by Nöldeke and as "'early' or 'early Meccan'" by Bell. Within this group, further states Watt, he has left aside those passages "where opposition to Muḥammad and the Qur'ân was expressed or implied", on the ground "that before opposition could arise some message which tended to arouse opposition must have been proclaimed".[2] The passages selected by him are:

96 (*sûrat al-'Alaq*): 1-8
74 (" *al-Muddaththir*): 1-10
106 (" *Quraysh*)
90 (" *al-Balad*): 1-11
93 (" *al-Ḍuḥâ*)
86 (" *al-Ṭâriq*): 1-10
80 (" *'Abasa*) 1-32
87 (" *al-'A'lâ*): 1-9; 14-15
84 (" *al-Inshiqâq*): 1-12
88 (" *al-Ghâshiyah*): 18-20
51 (" *al-Dhâriyât*): 1-6
52 (" *al-Ṭûr*): "some verses"
55 (" *al-Raḥmân*)

1. *Supra*, pp. 21-23 for a discussion on Bell's dating of the Qur'ân.
2. Watt, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

Thus having selected what he thinks to be the early passages of the Qur'ân Watt proceeds, in section II of his chapter, to discuss the contents of these early passages. In the sub-section (a) captioned *God's goodness and power*, Watt quotes in translation parts of a number of the above mentioned passages[1] and states that these emphasize God's goodness and power, particularly His creation and guidance of man, provision for his sustenance and the creation of the heavenly bodies, together with stressing "the transitoriness of the created existence and the permanence of the Creator".[2] He then makes two observations. He says that these passages show that the Qur'ân does not present the existence of God as something unknown, but assumes a vague belief in Him which it makes "more precise and vigorous" by stressing "that various common events are to be attributed to Him". Watt adds that this "tends to confirm the view that the conception of God had been seeping through to the Arabs from Judaeo-Christian monotheism".[3] Secondly, he says that though this emphasis on the power and goodness of God was a first step towards correcting the pagans' misconception of God as somewhat analogous to the other gods, "there is no mention of the unity of God", no stress "on this doctrine and no denunciation of idolatry". The purpose of the early passages, he asserts, was simply "to develop positively certain aspects of the vague belief in God", already existing among thoughtful Makkans, without highlighting the "contrast between this belief, with its tolerance of secondary gods, and a strict monotheism."[4]

In sub-section (b) Watt draws attention to another aspect of the message of the early passages, namely, their emphasis on the return to God for judgement and on the Day of Judgement. In substantiation of this point he refers specifically to 96:8; 74:8-10, 80:22; 86:4 and 84:12 which he quotes in translation.[5] A third aspect of the early message is dealt with in sub-section (c) which Watt captions *Man's response — gratitude and worship*. In this connection he refers to the expressions *ṭaghâ* (طغى) and *istaghnâ* (استغنى) which he interprets as "to be insolent" and "to act presumptuously" and

1. The passages translated are 96:1-5; 90:4, 8-10; 80:17-22; 87:1-3, 6-8; 55:1-3, 9-11, 20f.; 93:3-8; 106; 88:17-20.

2. Watt, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 64-66.

observes that the Makkans, because of their financial strength, "felt themselves independent of any higher power" and lost their "sense of creatureliness".[1] The early passages aim at rectifying this attitude and emphasize gratitude. And since gratitude "finds expression in worship", there are several commands to worship in the early passages, such as 74:3 f.; 106 and 87:14 f. "Worship", concludes Watt, "was a distinctive feature of Muḥammad's community from the first" and opposition "was early directed against the performance of worship".[2]

Similarly in sub-section (d) Watt deals with what he considers the fourth aspect of the early message which he terms "generosity and purification". He connects generosity with purification by his interpretation of the expressions *tazakkâ* / *yatazakkâ* occurring in some of the early passages. Indeed he devotes his Excursus D[3] to this subject and, on the basis of his conclusions there says that *tazakkâ* in the early Makkan and early Madinan passages "is dependent on similar use of the root in Hebrew, Aramaic and Syriac" and that it thus means "the moral purity of which a vague idea had been formed in the Arab mind through Judaeo-Christian influence."[4] Therefore, he argues, the expression carries almost the same meaning as "righteousness or uprightness" and is used as "a comprehensive description of what is involved in the following of Muḥammad in the earliest period with special emphasis on the ethical side."[5] In his search for this ethical side Watt quotes in translation 90:11; 104:1-3; 92:5-11; 53:54; 100:6-11; 89:18-21; 68:17-33; 69:33-35; 51:17-19 and 70:17[6] and says that the "content of these passages amounts simply to this that it is good to feed the poor and destitute and bad to gather wealth for oneself."[7] Thus, in effect, Watt identifies *tazakkâ* with generosity and concludes that the "early Qur'ânic ethic is entirely confined to matters of generosity and niggardliness or miserliness..."[8]

Finally, in sub-section (e) Watt points out that another aspect of the early

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 165-169.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

message is that it refers to Muḥammad's (ﷺ) special vocation as *nadhîr* and *mudhakkir*. He states that the word *'andhara* corresponds closely to the English 'warn' which means "informing a person of something of a dangerous, harmful, or fearful nature, so as to put him on his guard against it or put him in fear of it". It also implies that "the conception of judgement in some form must have been present from the beginning."[1] Thus, concludes Watt, in the early passages "the function of Muḥammad is confined to bringing to men's attention the matters mentioned in sub-sections (*a*) and (*b*) above", i.e., to "God's goodness and power" and "the return to God for judgement".[2]

II. EXAMINATION OF THE ASSUMPTIONS

(A) FAULTY SELECTION OF THE PASSAGES

Thus does Watt identify what he thinks the various aspects of the early message and the primary role of the Prophet. The early passages do of course speak about God's goodness and power, about the return to Him for judgement, about the Day of Judgement and about man's duty to be grateful and to perform worship. It is also true that the early revelations disapprove of gross materialism and selfishness and call for generosity and kindness. But it is not at all correct to say that there is "no mention of the unity of God", no emphasis on this doctrine and "no denunciation of idolatry". It is also not true that at the early stage the Prophet's role was confined to calling men's attention only to God's goodness and power and to be grateful and perform worship as an expression of gratitude. Watt makes these assertions by a faulty selection of the early passages, by faulty interpretations of them and by a series of faulty assumptions. Neither the facts, nor reason, nor even the tenor of his own arguments sustain his conclusions.

The obvious fault in his selection of the passages lies in the fact that the dating of Qur'ânic passages as made by Bell, on which Watt largely bases his statements, is not conclusive. As pointed out elsewhere,[3] not to speak of the Muslim scholars, even Western scholars do not universally accept Bell's dating. Watt himself entertains serious reservations about it saying, as he does here, that the results obtained by Bell, "though highly probable, are not altogether certain, since alternative views are often possible."[4] Neddless to

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
3. *Supra*, pp. 21-23.
4. Watt, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

point out, it is clearly hazardous to proceed on such uncertain grounds to make so unusual pronouncements on the contents of early Islamic revelations.

But Watt does not confine himself even to those passages that are regarded as early by both Nöldeke and Bell. Within this group, as he says, he leaves aside those that presuppose the growth of opposition because "before opposition could arise some message which tended to arouse opposition must have been proclaimed". This criterion is not at all a safe guide in the present case, for opposition and objections to the Prophet's claim to prophethood and to the message he delivered developed from the very beginning. This fact seems to have been recognized by both Nöldeke and Bell so that they did not adopt this criterion in determining the early passages. And Watt himself does not appear in practice to have adhered strictly to the principle he enunciates; and he is aware of it. For, after having named the passages he selects he says that it is conceivable that some of them "are to be dated after the first appearance of opposition, but since they are logically prior to it" he has disregarded this possibility.[1] It is not clear what he means by saying that they are conceivably posterior to the appearance of opposition "but logically prior to it". As will be shown presently, a number of passages which he has selected contain very clear indicatoins of the growth of opposition. Also, in his search for the "ethic" of the early message he in fact quotes a number of passages designated as early by both Nöldeke and Bell though they contain unmistakable indications of the growth of opoisition. These passages are: 104:1-3; 92:5-11; 68:17-33; 53:54 f.; 100:6-11; 89:18-21; 69:33-35; 51:17-19 and 70:17 f.[2] They are different from the list he gives at his p. 61 as early passages.

That opposition arose from the very beginning of the mission is in effect recognized also by Watt when he says that worship "was a distinctive feature of Muḥammad's community from the first" and opposition "was early directed against" its performance.[3] While saying this Watt ought to have pondered what the implications of the worship could have been that aroused opposition. As will be shown presently, he has not only failed to do so, but has either misunderstood or misinterpreted the commands to worship con-

1. Watt, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

tained in several of the early passages. In any case, by his own admission and practice Watt has not quite conformed to the criterion laid down by him and has selected some of the passages as early, though they presuppose the growth of opposition, because they seem to support his view, while he has left aside others of the same category understandably because they do not support what he intends to advance.

If this had not been done and if a little objective approach had been made it could have been seen that a number of the early passages do unequivocally enunciate monotheism and reject idolatry.[1] It should be recalled here that most scholars think that at least some 20 to 25 passages and *sûrahs* must have been revealed before the Prophet started preaching the message; and Watt himself quotes some 22 in his search for the primary message. If only his list is modified, and it ought to be modified, but keeping within the limit of 20 to 25 passages and *sûrahs*, one would get a very different picture. Thus *sûrah* 1 (*al-Fâtiḥah*), which is only the fifth in the order of revelation according to Muslim scholars and which is counted as 8th and 6th respectively by Rodwell and Muir, contain a very clear statement of monotheism. And although its last *'âyah* is sometimes supposed to have reference to some "unspecified sects", as Margoliouth puts it, the meaning would be clear and universal even if such implications are not assumed. Similarly the early part of *sûrah* 73 (*al-Muzzammil*), at least its first 9 or 10 *'âyahs*, which passage is traditionally counted as only the third in the order of revelation and which is regarded as 3rd, 20th and 23rd respectively by Rodwell, Jeffery and Nöldeke, states in its *'âyah* 9 that Allah is the "Lord of the East and the West, there is none worthy of worship except He. So take Him as Guardian." ﴿رب المشرق والمغرب لا إلــه الا هو فاتخذه وكيلا﴾. It is further to be noted that this particular passage does not contain any allusion whatsoever to the growth of opposition. Again *sûrah* 112 (*al-Ikhlâṣ*), which is counted by the Muslim scholars as the 22nd in the order of revelation but which is assigned the 10th and the 20th position respectively by Rodwell and Muir, is a classic statement on monotheism and an uncompromising rejection of idolatry. So is the case with *sûrah* 109 (*al-Kâfirûn*) which the Muslim scholars count as the 18th in the order of revelation but which is placed as the 12th by Rodwell.

Watt not only leaves aside such *sûrahs* and passages. Even of those *sûrahs* from which he selects some passages, he carefully excludes those

1. See *supra*, pp. 390-400.

very portions that strongly speak of monothesim, though they do not contain any indication of the growth of opposition. A glaring instance is his treatment of *sûrah* 51 (*al-Dhâriyât*) of which he takes *'âyahs* 1-6 but specifically excludes its *'âyah* 51 which states: "And do not set with Allah another *'ilâh* (object of worship); I am from Him a warner to you, clear and explicit." Watt's reason for excluding it from his list is that, according to Bell, "it is probably a later addition". And in support of this supposition and *probability* Watt further states that the *'âyah* "certainly sounds like the repetition of a point already made; had it been a fresh point it would have received greater emphasis."[1] Now, it must at once be pointed out that this *'âyah*, together with its five preceding ones, constitute a compact passage and it draws attention to what Watt calls God's goodness and power. Also it does not contain any indication of the growth of opposition. More importantly, it emphasizes the Prophet's role as *nadhîr* (warner) of which Watt is particularly cognizant, including an indication of the subject-matter of his warning. Thus by Watt's own criteria, as also Bell's, this passage ought to have been included in the list of early revelations. The only reason which appears to have induced Watt to exclude it from his list is the presence in it of a clear enunciation of monotheism. That the passage is a unit would be clear if it is quoted here. It runs as follows:

﴿والسمآء بنينـٰـها بأييد وإنا لموسعون * والأرض فرشنـٰـها فنعم المـٰـهدون * ومن كل شيء خلقنا زوجين لعلكم تذكرون * ففرّوٓا إلى الله إنى لكم منه نذير مبين * ولا تجعلوا مع الله إلـٰـها ءاخر إنى لكم منه نذير مبين﴾ (٥١-٤٧:٥١)

"And the sky, We have made it with Hands and verily We are expanding (it).[2] And the earth We have spread it; and how excellently do We spread! And of everything We have made pairs, that you may receive instruction. Hence, flee to Allah; surely I am from Him a warner to you, clear and explicit. And do not set with Allah another *'ilâh* (object of worship); certainly I am from Him a warner to you, clear and explicit." (51:47-51)

Nothing could be a more emphatic and explicit enunciation of the doctrine of monotheism and an exhortation to the audience to "flee" to Allah from what they were on. Also, nothing could be a greater emphasis on the Prophet's role as warner and a clearer exposition of what he was warning against. It is therefore strange that Watt resorts to the argument that "had it

1. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
2. See *supra* pp. 309-310 for the significance of this expression.

been a fresh point it would have received greater emphasis." It is not conceivable what greater emphasis could have been there on the subject! But since Watt counts the first six *'âyahs* of the *sûrah* as among the very early passages to be revealed, and since he also regards its 51st *'âyah* as a "later addition" but nonetheless a repetition of a point already made, it would have been only logical on his part if he had pursued the question in an attempt to identify the passages that were earlier than this one and that first made the point of which 51:51 is said to be a "repetition". Watt does not, however, do anything of that sort.

Equally subjective and arbitrary is his treatment of *sûrah* 52 (*al-Ṭûr*). He does not at first specify any *'âyah* or passage from it but simply points out that "some verses" of it are early. Later on in his sub-section (b) dealing with "the return to God for judgement" he cites and quotes *'âyahs* 7 and 8 of the *sûrah* which, as he notes, emphasize "the reality and certainty" of judgement and punishment.[1] The two *'âyahs* run as follows:﴿إن عذاب ربك لوٰقع * ما له من دافع﴾ "Verily the punishment of your Lord is sure to come to pass; there is none who can avert it". The initial six *'âyahs* of the sûrah are "oaths" emphasizing this statement. It may be noted that the first six *'âyahs* of the previous *sûrah* (51 *al-Dhâriyât*) which Watt includes in his list and which also he quotes in this sub-section speak about the same thing. The first four *'âyahs* are "oaths" emphasizing what follows in *'âyahs* 5-6 which state: "Verily what you have been promised (i.e., warned about) is true. The Judgement is sure to come to pass"﴿إنما توعدون لصادق * وإن الدين لوٰقع﴾

Now it is simply inconceivable that either these six (in effect 2)[2] *'âyahs* or the two *'âyahs* of *sûrah* 52 (*al-Ṭûr*) should have been revealed completely divorced from a mention of the duty for which an account is certainly to be rendered and failure in which would inevitably entail punishment. The point at issue was not "God's goodness and power" but very much God's *godness* (*'ulûhiyah*) and His claim to man's absolute and undivided allegiance. It is this more fundamental and serious issue which forms the main theme of *sûrah* 51, as shown above, as also of *sûrah* 52. In both attention is called to the inevitability and certainty of judgement and punishment by way of bringing home this theme. It is in this strain that *'âyah* 43 of the *sûrah* 52 throws out the question: "Or, is there an *'ilâh* for them other than Allah? Exalted

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.
2. The frist 4 *'âyahs* are only oalths.

and Holy is He from what they set as partners (for Him)."[1] The *sûrah* ends with an exhortation to worship Him (Alone).[2] There is thus a unity in the *sûrah* as a whole and the dominating theme in it is the absolute Unity of God and His claim to man's undivided allegiance. The warning about judgement and punishment is an inseparable appertinent to this main theme. It would be simply arbitrary and unnatural to divorce this warning from the fundamental issue and treat it as separate from or posterior to the former. In carrying out such unnatural dissection Watt indeed appears to have been aware of the weakness of his position. For, towards the end of his sub-section he remarks that "the verses just discussed, 51.5f. and 52.7f.,...seem to belong rather to the transition to the second stage when opposition was appearing, and doubts about the reality of judgement had been expressed."[3] The remark is yet another recognition of the fact that opposition and objection to the Prophet's mission started right from the beginning. It is also an admission of the untenability of the criterion that passages are earlier or later according as they do not or do conatin indication of the growth of opposition. The confusion and compromises made by Watt could easliy have been averted if the *'âyahs* dealing with judgement and punishment were not arbitrarily isolated from the fundamental issue of the Unity of God which is the subject-matter of the warning and which is very much mentioned along with it but to which Watt (or rather his mentor Bell) assigns a later date.

(B) MISTAKEN INTERPRETATION OF THE PASSAGES

Leaving aside the passages and *sûrahs* which Watt does not take into account, even the passages which he himself selects contain unmistakable references to *tawḥîd* or absolute Unity of God and rejection of idolatry. He either fails to grasp their implications or misinterprets them in order to bring them in line with his assumption. A glaring instance of such avoidance or misinterpretation is his treatment of 74:3 (*al-Muddaththir*). He does not produce its translation in his sub-section on "God's goodness and power" but does so in sub-section (c) — "Gratitude and worship" — where he translates it as "Thy Lord magnify" and says that it is a command to worship.[4] And

1. 52:4 = ﴿أم لهم إلـٰـه غير الله سبحـٰـن الله عما يشركون﴾

2. 52:49 = ﴿ومن اليل فسبحه وإدبـٰـر النجوم﴾ "And for part of the night, sing His Holiness and Sacredness, and at retreat of the stars (i.e. at dawn)". (52:49).

3. Watt, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

then, in sub-section (e) — "Muḥammad's own vocation" — he produces the translation again and says that it refers to the Prophet's vocation as *nadhîr* (warner).[1] In fact, the *'âyah* is not a command to worship but is directly related to the previous *'âyah* which commands the Prophet to "Rise and warn"(قم فأنذر). While recognizing the connection between the two *'âyahs* Watt states somewhat confusingly that the latter *'âyah* is one of the "other passages" indicating the Prophet's "unique and special vocation." It must be noted that it is not another passage but simply the previous *'âyah* to "Thy Lord magnify". Indeed, as pointed out earlier,[2] all the commands in the passage 74:1-7 following the command at the second *'âyah* are related to it and are in elucidation of what the Prophet was to warn about. What then is the meaning of the command *kabbir*, "magnify"? And in relation to what was this magnification to be done? If it means simply to proclaim God's greatness or goodness it ceases to have any relevance to the act of warning. Hence, with reference to this context and keeping in view the import of the command, the expression *kabbir* must be taken to mean the proclamation of the special and absolute greatness of "Your Lord" over and above all other beings and over and above all conceptual inadeqacies, so that indifference to or disregard of such special greatness calls for warning. It is this sense which the command *kabbir* carries here and in which it was understood by those to whom it was addressed. The command in this particular form, *kabbir,* occurs at only one other place in the Qur'ân where the context makes its meaning very clear. It occurs in 17:111 (*sûrat al-'Isrâ'*) which runs as follows:

﴿وقل الحمد لله الذى لم يتخذ ولدا ولم يكن له شريك فى الملك ولم يكن له ولى من الذلّ وكبره تكبيرا﴾

"And say, 'Praise be to Allah Who has not taken to Himself a son, nor is there an associate with Him in the dominion (*'ulûhiyah*); nor is there any helper for Him on account of any weaknes; 'and (thus) proclaim His greatness, a true proclmation."

The first part of the *'âyah* is a definition of the act of *takbîr*, i.e., proclaiming Allah's greatness and it is in that sense the command *kabbir* has been made and understood since the very beginning of the revelation. And in the Islamic parlance *takbîr* has ever since meant: say *Allah Akbar*, Allah is the *Greatest*.

The matter becomes clearer in connection with the fourth command in the passage, i.e., 74:5, ﴿والرّجز فاهجر﴾ "And the abomination, shun." All the recognized authorities on the Arabic language and Qur'ânic exegesis take

1. *Ibid*., p. 71.
2. *Supra*, pp. 395-396.

rujz to mean the worship of idols and interpret the *'âyah* as a command to avoid the worship of idols, which is considered filth, dirt and uncleanliness.[1] As Fakhr al-Dîn al-Râzî points out, *al-rujz* is equivalent in meaning to *al-rijs* (الرجس); and worship of idols is described elsewhere in the Qur'ân as *rijs*, as in 22:30.[2] The command implies perseverence and continuity in the act of avoiding, not simply avoiding in the first instance, as Fakhr al-Dîn al-Râzî points out.

Although the command is thus directly related to the command "Rise and warn" and occurs in the same passage Watt takes 74:5 out of this context and discusses it under his subsection (b) — "the return to God for judgement." Following Bell he says that the word *rujz* is derived from the Syriac *rugza* meaning 'wrath' and thinks that the word "presumably originally had an eschatological connotation."[3] The question of the origin of the word apart, the meaning 'wrath' here would be simply out of context and misfit, whatever eschatological connotation is presumed for it. It would beg the further question: 'wrath' of whom, and for what? If it is taken to mean God's wrath, and nothing else would at all be appropriate, then it ought to be related to the command preceding it, namely, the duty to proclaim God's "greatness", failure in which duty would justly occasion His 'wrath'.

Before leaving this passage (74:1-10) it should be noted that there are at least two allusions in it to the growth of opposition to the message. The first is the *'âyah* 74:7 "And for (the sake of) thy Lord be patient" ﴿ولربك فاصبر﴾. The Prophet is plainly told that in the discharge of his duty as *nadhîr* he has to be patient. Clearly a hard time for him had either already set in or was about to ensue in consequence of his preaching. Similarly 74:10, which says that the Day of Judgement will be far from easy for the *kâfirîn*, shows that some persons had already proved themselves *kâfirs* or rejecters of the message. Watt appears to avoid this significance of the *'âyah*; for though he translates the word *kâfirin* as "unbelievers" in his sub-section (b),[4] in his sub-section (c) on "gratitude and worship" he says, on the analogy of the expression *mâ-'akfarahu* in 80:17 that 74:10 which says that the Day of

1. See for instance Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr,* 29/93; Fakhr al-Dîn al-Râzî, *Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr*, 30/193.

2. *Ibid*. The *'âyah* runs as follows: ﴿فاجتنبوا الرّجس من الأوثان ...﴾ See also 5:93: 9:95; 9:125.

3. *Watt, op. cit.*, p. 64.

4. *Ibid.*

Judgement will be difficult for the *kâfirin*, "probably meant for its first audience that it would be difficult 'for the ungrateful'."[1] It should at once be pointed out that the same word bears different meanings in different contexts. The plain meaning of the word *kâfir* is a rejecter of the message, hence unbeliever. This is the most natural meaning of the term in 74:10, as Watt himself first translates it. So there is no need to try to show that "for its first audience" it probably meant "the ungrateful". The problem is that Watt either fails to understand or avoids the correct significance of what he calls statements relating to God's goodness and the duty to be grateful and to worship, as will be explained presently. Hence he gives one meaning to an expression at one place, and quite another meaning to the same expression at another place. The primary meaning of *kâfir* is evident from 43:24, ﴿قالوا إنا بما أرسلتم به كـٰفرون ...﴾ : "They said, we are indeed rejecters of what you have been sent with." Be that as it may, even if the meaning "ungrateful" is assumed for the word in 74:10, that would nonetheless imply some kind of rejection of the message, and therefore growth of opposition.

The doctrine of strict monotheism is equally emphatically asserted in another of Watt's passages, i.e., 87:1, ﴿سبح اسم ربك الأعلى﴾ . To translate it as "Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High" would be both poor and inaccurate. The primary meaning of the expression *sabbiḥ* (سبّح) is *nazzih* (نزّه), that is, to declare or render someone holy, sacred, immune from and beyond any blemish and shortcoming.[2] The *'âyah* is thus a direct command to declare the holiness, sublimity and transcendence of "Your Lord, the Most High", from all kinds of erroneous assumptions and ascriptions, such as His having partners or being co-eval with any other entity, as was believed and asserted by the commonalty of the Makkans and Arabs of the time. The directive was made, and has to be understood, in the context of the prevailing situation and notion. As one of the most respected authorities on the Arabic language and Qur'ânic lexicography points out, the expressions *sabbiḥ* (سبح) and *subḥân* (سبحـٰن) have been used in the Qur'ân in relation to Allah in at least seven shades of meaning, all having in view His attributes, positively or negatively.[3] Negatively they denote His absolute holiness and immunity from all kinds of weaknesses and drawbacks, particularly His

1. *Ibid*., p. 66.
2. See *Tâj al-'Arûs*, II, p. 156.
3. Majd al-Dîn Muḥammad Ya'qûb al-Fîrûzâbâdî, *Baṣâ'ir Dhawî al-Tam'yîz Fî Laṭâ'if al-Kitâb al-'Azîz*, Vol. III, second Egyptian edn., 1968,pp.172-178.

being free from and independent of any associate. This is very clear from the instances where the expression *subḥân* (سبحـٰن) has been used in connection with Allah. Some of these self-explanatory instances are as follows:

1. 52:43 = ﴿أم لهم إلـٰـه غير الله سبحـٰـن الله عمّا يشركون﴾
2. 59:23 = ﴿هو الله الذى لا الـٰـه الا هو ... سبحـٰـن الله عمّا يشركون﴾
3. 39:04 = ﴿سبحـٰـنه هو الله الوٰحد القهّار﴾
4. 28:68 = ﴿.... سبحـٰـن الله وتعـٰـلىٰ عمّا يشركون﴾

6-9. 39:67; 30:40; 16:1 and 10:8 ﴿... سبحـٰـنه وتعـٰـلىٰ عمّا يشركون﴾

10. 9:31 = ﴿... لا الـٰـه إلا هو سبحـٰـنه عمّا يشركون﴾[1]

It may also be noted that the expression *al-'A'lâ* (الأعلىٰ), The Most High, has the same implication of *tawḥîd*, for Allah is to be regarded as High and Above all others. The derivative *ta'âlâ* (تعالىٰ) is used in that very sense in the instances 4-9 quoted above. A few more instances are provided by 27:63; 23:96; 16:3 and 7:190. The first one reads: ﴿ أإلـٰـه مع الله تعـٰـلىٰ الله عمّا يشركون ﴾ "Can there be an *'ilâh* along with Allah? He transcends far above what they set as partners." It should thus be clear that the combination of the command *sabbiḥ* with the description of "Your Lord" as "The Most High" (الأعلىٰ) is an unmistakable enunciation of strict monotheism.

The same sense of *tawḥîd* is conveyed also by the expressions *tazakkâ* / *yazzakâ*. Drawing chiefly on Jeffery's *Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ân* Watt attempts to assign a Syriac / Hebrew / Aramaic origin to the expression and suggests that it was used in Arabic in the sense of righteousness or uprightness. Further, referring to the various uses of the term in the Qur'ân he suggests that in the Madinan period it underwent a change of meaning. He then draws attention to what he considers the only ethic in the early passages of the Qur'ân and says that at the early stage *yazzakâ* meant attaining righteousness or uprightness by conforming to that ethic, namely, practising generosity. The round-aboutness of the argument apart, with regard to all these assumptions it needs only to be recalled what has been stated earlier[2] that even a word of foreign origin, when naturalized in another country or society often assumes a meaning or meanings quite different from the meaning of the root-word in the original language. Also, a particular word in any particular language is often used in various senses depending on the con-

1. See also Q. 12:108; 6:100; 4:171; 25:18; 34:41; 37:180.
2. *Supra*, pp. 425-426.

texts. Hence it does not necessarily follow that the use of the expression *tazakkâ* in a Madinan passage in a sense different from that in a Makkan *sûrah* means that the implication of the term underwent a change. Nothing illustrates this point better than the use of the expression *yazzakkâ* in 80:3 and 80:7, both of which are recognized by Watt as having been revealed at the same time. The Prophet is mildly rebuked in this passage for having turned his attention away from an humble and blind man (Ibn Umm Maktûm) although he might *yazzakâ*, and having instead paid special attention to a rich Makkan, who considered himself self-sufficient (*istaghnâ* استغنى), though it would be no fault of the Prophet if that rich man did not *yazzakâ*. Now, it is obvious that though *yazzakkâ* in the case of the rich and proud man might mean attaining uprightness by practising generosity, that would not at all apply to the poor and blind fellow who did not have to attain that sort of righteousness. The fact is that in many places in the Qur'ân the expressions *yazzakkâ* and *yatazakkâ* have been used in the sense of purifying one's self from the filth of idolatry and polytheism and thus paving the way for the health and growth of one's soul. In other words, *yazzakkâ* means, as definitely in 80:3, accepting *tawḥîd*.[1] It is for this reason that one of the authorities on Qur'ânic exegesis, Ibn Zayd, states, as Watt recognizes,[2] that *al-tazakkî* throughout the Qur'ân means Islam.[3] Watt sets out to contradict that general sense of the expression in the early passages and is in turn only involved in a round-about and labyrinthian argumentation. For one thing, neither the poor and blind man, nor the proud and rich Makkan did come to the Prophet to take a lesson on the ethic of generosity.

Indeed, what Watt identifies as simply illustrative of God's goodness and as emphasis on "the return to God for judgement" are all intended to bring home the doctrine of the Unity of God (*tawḥîd*). Also the "vocation" of the Prophet as *nadhîr* or warner is emphasized for the same purpose. As Watt recognizes, the act of warning means "informing a person of something of a dangerous, harmful, or fearful nature, so as to put him on his guard against it or put him in fear of it." It was against the fearful consequences of rejecting *tawḥîd* and indulging in polytheism against which the Prophet warned, and not simply against the offence of being ungrateful to or unmindful of God's

1. See Fîrûz'âbâdî, *op. cit.*, p. 135. Fîrûz'âbâdî identifies 16 different shades of meaning for the word (*ibid.*, pp.134-135).

2. Watt, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

3. Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr*, on 79:18.

goodness. Similarly the emphasis on the inevitability and certainty of judgement and punishment is intended to bring home the same theme of monotheism. Thus what Watt calls the distinct aspects of the early message are really intimately and inseparably connected with the central theme of monotheism. Even the emphasis on the worship of God, which Watt presents as only a requisite for the duty of gratitude, is only a practical demonstration of the doctrine of *tawḥîd*. It may be recalled here that the concept of *tawḥîd* has three facets, two of them being *tawḥîd al-rubûbiyyah* and *tawḥîd al-'ulûhiyyah*. *Tawḥîd al-rububiyyah* or recognition of God as the Creator and supreme Lord in all afairs was vaguely known to the Arabs, not because it seeped through Judaeo-Christian sources, as Watt would have us believe, but because these faiths and many of the beliefs of the Arabs had their origin in the divine message delivered by Prophet Ibrâhîm but subsequently confused. The confusion occurred mainly in respect of *tawḥîd al-'ulûhiyyah*, i.e., God as the One Only object of worship. It was lost sight of by the then Arabs, "pagans" and "Chirstians" alike. Watt appears to have failed to grasp this aspect of the matter. Hence he has made rather inconsistent statements about the subject. Thus he first says that the Qur'ân assumes "a vague belief in God, and makes this more precise," etc.,[1] and then, a little later, remarks that the Qur'ân "ostensibly makes a fresh start" but in fact only acts "as a centre of integration" for the vague and nebulous tendencies towards monotheism as typified by the search for *ḥanîfiyyah*;[2] and finally, in a recent work, states: "Since writing *Muhammad at Mecca* I have also become more fully aware of the presence in Mecca of many persons who believed in Allah as a high or supreme deity to whom other deities might make intercession, and I now regard this as a factor of primary importance."[3] This fact ought to have been clear to any careful reader of the Qur'ân and of the writings of any recognized Muslim scholar like Al-Mas'ûdî or ibn Taymiyyah. It has long been recognized also by many of Watt's predecessors like Sale and Hitti.[4] Be

1. Watt, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
3. Watt, *Muḥammad's Mecca*, Edinburgh University Press,1988, preface, vii.
4. Hitti, for instance writes: "Allah (*allâh*, *al-ilâh*, the god) was the principal, though not the only, deity of Makkah. The name is an ancient one. It occurs in two South Arabic inscriptions.... The name of Muḥammad's father was 'Abd-Allah ('Abdullah, the slave or worshipper of Allah). The esteem in which Allah was held by the pre-Islamic Makkans as the creator and supreme provider and the one to be invoked in time of special peril may be inferred from such koranic passages as 31:24,31; 6:137,109; 10:23". -P.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs,* (first published 1937), 10th edition, reprinted 1986, pp. 100-101.

that as it may, it is good that Watt has at last been more fully aware of this fact, which is of course of "primary importance." But what he does not fully recognize is that the Prophet was quite aware of this fact relating to his own society and time. Therefore, his first and primary aim could not have been but to dispel the mistake and misconception in which the commonalty of his people had been involved. Thus, when the Quraysh were called upon to "worship[1] the Lord of this House", they were in fact exhorted to give up the worship of the imaginary gods and goddesses whom they had set up as *'âlihah* (plural of *'ilâh*), i.e., as objects of worship. It was for that very reason that worship of Allah alone was insisted upon from the very beginning and was, as Watt recognizes, "a distinctive feature of Muḥammad's community from the first." And it was precisely for this implication of the new type of worship that opposition "was early directed against" it; for worship of Allah as the only and sole *'ilâh* meant the open and unequivocal abandonment of the other imaginary *'ilâhs* of whom the Quraysh leaders were the devotees and acknowledged guardian-priests. That is also why the first formula of Islamic belief has been from the very beginning *Lâ'ilâh illâ Allah* (No*'ilâh* except Allah), not *Lâ rabb illâ Allah*; for recognition of Allah's *ulûhiyyah* involves the recognition of his *rubûbiyyah*, not *vice versa*.

This brings us to Watt's main thesis that the early message simply developed "positively certain aspects of the vague belief in God"[2] and that it otherwise acted "as a centre of integration" for *the vague and nebulous* tendencies exhibited by the *ḥanîfs*.[3] This recognition of the existence of a vague belief in God and of the trend towrds the search for *ḥanîfiyyah* in fact constitutes the strongest objection to Watt's assumption. For, under the circumstances, neither the Prophet could have embarked upon a new mission nor could anyone have paid any heed to him unless the message he initially delivered was easily recognized to be a marked advance upon the vague beliefs and tendencies. Particularly the *ḥanîfs* and other individuals with similar tendencies, a number of whom by Watt's admission accepted the Prophet's message and followed him in the very initial phase, would not have done so if they had not found something new and better in it. It is worth remembering in this connection that many of the *ḥanîfs* had not only openly abandoned the worship of idols and inveighed against them, but had also been in the

1. Not "serve", as Watt translates the word here — Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca*, p. 67.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 96.

habit of not partaking of any meat or food dedicated to them. And we have the statement of at least one such person, 'Amr ibn 'Abasah who, hearing about the Prophet, came to him at the very initial stage of his mission and directly asked him what he meant by his being a *nabî* (Prophet). He explained that God had chosen him to preach, among other things, the Unity of God and to ask people not to associate anyone with Him. The reply convinced 'Amr of the truth of the mission and he believed.[1] It must be emphasized that it is a statement by one of the actors in the drama and he had no reason subsequently to embellish the reason for his believing. The story is only illustrative of what in the nature of things must have happened with regard to many of the others who had already imbibed the spirit of *ḥanîfiyyah* or tendency towards monotheism. None would have gathered round the Prophet if he had initially only confined himself to the subtle intellectual exercise of gradually developing "positively" what is called the ideas of God's goodness and power. That simple concept of God's goodness and power was no new thing, neither to the pagans, nor , more emphatically, to the "thoughtful Meccans", the *ḥanîfs* and their sort. Watt simply labours unsuccessfully to present his peculiar view in order to connect it, as will be seen presently, with the questionable story of the "Satanic verses" and his theory about the growth of opposition.[2] Before turning our attention to that question, however, it remains to see what he has to say on the relevance of the early message to the contemporary situation.

III. ON RELEVANCE TO THE CONTEMPORARY SITUATION

Since the beginning of modern writings on the Prophet there has scarcely been an author who has not attempted in some form or other to relate the emergence of the Prophet and the rise of Islam generally to the socio-economic and political circumstances of the time. For instance Hitti, after reviewing the social, political and religious situation in Arabia observes: "The stage was set, the moment was psychological, for the rise of a great religious and national leader."[3] Watt's paying attention to this question of relevance to the contemporary situation is thus no new approach. He is distinguished from his predecessors, however, in two principal respects. In the first place, he disavows, more emphatically than anyone else, any intention to explain the rise of Islam in purely secularist terms; yet, in effect, he only

1. *Musnad*, IV, 111, 112; Ibn Sa'd, IV, 214-219.
2. See *infra*, chaps. XXIX & XXXI.
3. Hitti, *op. cit.*, 108.

does so. Secondly, he speculates on a particular form of the contemporary situation and then twists the facts to fit them in with that situation.

It must be pointed out at the very outset that the Qur'ânic message, both early and later, has of course relevance to the prevailing situation. This relevance is both particular and general or universal. It has in its immediate view the particular socio-religious and moral situation in Arabia of the time; but it is equally applicable and relevant to any time and place, whenever or wherever there is error and misguidance, idolatry and polytheism, social injustice and disregard of human values and rights, and loss of a sense of purpose in life or total engrossment in worldly life. In fact to deny the relevance of the message to a given situation would be to deny its very purpose and need. Within this broad sphere of relevance, however, one should be careful to draw inferences and conclusions about it. And it is precisely such inferences and assumptions of the orientalists on the matter, particularly of Watt, that call for close examination.

Watt deals with the subject in sections 3 and 4 of his chapter III, more particularly in section 3.[1] He deduces what he calls the "diagnosis of the contemporary malaise" from the 'remedy' suggested in the early passages of the Qur'ân. Hence he proceeds to consider "the diagnosis and the remedy at the same time" under four sub-sections — social, moral, intellectual and religious. The central theme in all these sub-sections is his assumption that the mercantile life in Makka had fostered individualism resulting in a "weakening of social solidarity". Similarly his general conclusion throughout these sub-sections is that the Qur'ânic teachings were adapted to this situation and that those teachings were also largely based on the pre-Islamic nomadic values and concepts.

In his first sub-section Watt discusses the *social* situation. He points out that the Qur'ân shows that the amassing of large fortunes had been the preoccupation of many Makkans which, he says, was a sign of individualism. The Qur'ân also shows that orphans were ill-treated, "presumably by their relatives who acted as guardians." All these led to a widening of the gap between the rich and the poor, or rather "between rich, not-so-rich and poor", and to a weakening of social solidarity and loss of the sense of community and security "which came from clan and family relationships."[2] Thus

1. Watt, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-79.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

identifying the social malaise Watt relates the teachings of the early passages to the situation in three ways. As regards the question of social solidarity he says that the early passages of the Qur'ân have "no more than a premonition of the real remedy for this situation, namely, that a new basis for social solidarity is to be found in relgion.[1] As regards the gap between the rich and not-so-rich etc., it is said that the insistence on generosity and on the principle that man is given wealth partly in trust for the community (70:24) might lead to some alleviation of the troubles. As regards individualism Watt says that there "was no possibility of return to the old tribal solidarity. Man's consciousness of himself as an individual had come to saty". Hence the Qur'ân accepts this fact "in the conception of the Last Judgement, for that is essentially a judgement on individuals."[2]

What Watt says here and in the remaining part of his chapter III is yet another aspect of his economic interpretation of the rise of Islam. Indeed a little later he clearly states that what he has suggested is "that the rise of Islam is somehow connected with the change from a nomadic to a mercantile economy."[3] In this statement and in his suggestion generally Watt either overdraws or oversimplifies. It is just not correct that the Makkan economy on the eve of the rise of Islam and for half a century or more prior to it marked a transition from nomadic to mercantile economy. On the contrary, since the very beginning of Makkan history, indeed since the time of the settlement of the Quraysh at Makka, it presents the spectacle of a mercantile economy, however poor or prosperous. Throughout the preceding centuries the Quraysh had continued to survive or thrive as a mercantile community. It is therefore a grossly misleading or mistaken statement that the rise of Islam coincided with or was attendant upon the transition from a nomadic to a mercantile economy.

Proceeding on the basis of this fundamental misconception Watt makes three further assumptions. (i) He says that there was a concentration of wealth in a few hands which widened the gap between the "rich, not-so-rich and the poor". (ii) This concentration of wealth was both an effect as well as a cause of the growth of individualism. (iii) These cause and effect, i.e. concentration of wealth in a few hands and the growth of inidvidualism led to a

1. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, p. 79. The idea is really not Watt's, but Bell's and C.C. Torrey's.

weakening of social solidarity and a loss of the sense of community which came from clan and family relationships. In all these assumptions Watt is largely mistaken.

As regards the first assumption, namely, that there was a spate of commercial activities in Makka just on the eve of the rise of Islam and consequently an unusual concentration of wealth in a few hands, a recent writer has very convincingly shown that the thesis is not tenable. She further points out that Watt appears to have simply taken over the conclusions of Henry Lammenms, "a notoriously unreliable scholar."[1] There were of course a group of rich and obstinate leaders in Makka; but the emergence of such a group was no sudden or recent development. As Watt himself recognizes, wealth and influence in Makka had alternated between different groups and clans since the very beginning of its history. And since the phenomenon was no new or sudden development, it is equally wrong to assume that that phenomenon led to a widening of the gap between "the rich, not-so-rich and poor."

In fact the last expression is somewhat confusing. It rather betrays the speciousness of Watt's assumption; for when we say "rich, not-so-rich and poor", it is evident that the gap between the groups identified is neither wide nor unusually remarkable. Watt's adoption of this expression appears to be a compromise between his two mutually exclusive attitudes. He intends to give a sort of pseudo-socialistic and economic interpretation of the rise of Islam; at the same time he would not agree with those who say that Islam represented a sort of socialistic reform movement. It also shows his awareness of the disagreement between his assumption and the facts; for he recognizes, as noted earlier, that most of those who initially joined the Islamic movement did not belong to the "poor" group but to the "rich" and "not-so-rich" groups. He also admits that whatever might be the nature of the gap between the first two groups, in accepting Islam the early converts were not at all actuated by such economic and social considerations.[2] Nor, it should be emphasized, was the Qur'ânic exhortation to generosity intended primarily to bridge the gap between the "rich, not-so-rich and poor".

Similarly misleading is the emphasis placed on the supposed growth of individualism which is stated to be both the cause and effect of mercantil-

1. Patricia Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, Oxford, 1987, p. 3.
2. *Infra*, pp. 601-602.

ism. A fair degree of individualism and personal independence had been in existence, within the framework of the tribal and clan system, since time immemorial. Individuals very much owned and bequeathed property and pursued the trade or profession of their own choice. As Watt himself recognizes, tribal honour, which was an expression of the ideal of *murû'ah*, often ment honour of the individual member of the tribe and the "nomadic outlook also had a high opinion of human power."[1] As in the past, so also on the eve of the rise of Islam, "financial and material interests were the basis of partnerships as often as blood relationship"; but this was so *not* in disregard nor in substitution of the latter. On the contrary, the interest of an individual, if he was strong enough, was often taken up by his tribe as their own cause. The case of those who supported Al-'Âṣ ibn Wâ'il and did not join the *ḥilf al-fuḍûl* is an instance in point. But beyond that, no further development of individulaism is discernible in the Makkan society on the eve of the rise of Islam.

The Qur'ân insisted on the accountability of each individual before God not because "man's consciousness of himself as an individual had come to stay, and therefore had to be taken into account", nor because there "was no possibility of return to the old tribal solidarity", as Watt would have us believe.[2] It did so just for the reverse reason — because man had forgotten the principle of personal and individual responsibility to God and because the notion prevailed that a person's belonging to a particular racial stock or tribe entitled him to preferential treatment in the sight of God, or that someone had atoned for his sins or that he had influential leaders, gods and demigods to intercede for him before God. The Qur'ân emphasized the principle of personal and individual responsibility for each and every one, not excluding the Prophets themselves, just to combat the above mentioned wrong notions. And in so far as it did it, the Qur'ân introduced true individualism in human affairs and struck at the root of that prevailing tribal notion which regarded it as *honour* to defend and take up the cause of any of its members irrespective of the merit of his action. In his attempt to deduce the "malady" from the "remedy" Watt simply puts here the case in just the reverse order.

Nor is the assumption at all correct that the supposed growth of individualism had undermined tribal and clan solidarity to such an extent

1. Watt, *op. cit.*, pp. 74, 76.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

that there was a loss of the sense of "security which came from clan and family relationships." Such was not at all the case. Clan and family solidarity was as strong and effective on the eve of the rise of Islam as it ever had been. Throughout the pre-*hijrah* period the Prophet himself was protected by this traditional system of clan solidarity. There is no evidence at all that those who embraced Islam did so because of their desire to find an alternative basis for social solidarity. On the contrary, when the first batch of the emigrants to Abyssinia returned to Makka[1] each of them sought and procured the traditional pattern of personal security before entering Makka. The assumption of a loss of the sense of tribal and clan security on the eve of the rise of Islam is a figment of Watt's imagination which he only betrays when he says that the "early passages of the Qur'ân have no more than a premonition of the real remedy for the situation, namely, that a new basis for social security is to be found in religion."[2] It is only to be added that the early pssages do not even contain a "premonition of the remedy", because there was no such "malady" as is assumed by Watt. Islam did of course ultimately provide a new basis for social solidarity, but that was clearly a very subsequent development, and when that was done, the reason was not the breakdown of the traditional pattern of social security but because of the emergence of a new situation consequent upon the success of Islam. As with regard to the previous point, here also Watt seems to have been eloped into the error by his policy of deducing the "malady" from the "remedy"; and here again he puts as fact what is just its reverse.

In his second sub-section Watt deals with the moral situation. Here also he presses more or less the same assumption of the effect of mercantilism, but from a different angle. He says that the old nomadic ideal of *murû'ah*, particularly in its aspect of "protection of the weak and defiance of the strong" had been quietly abandoned in Makka because "succcess in commerce and finance is linked up with disregard for the weak and cultivation of the friendship of the strong" and because the financier always tries "to increase his fortune". Also the sanction of the ideal lay in public opinion, but "with the growth of large fortunes at Mecca public opinion apparently ceased to count for much there." At the same time the need for charity in a city like Makka was just as great as in the desert.[3]

1. *Infra*, pp. 672-673.
2. Watt, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75.

Watt then argues that the acts of generosity were regarded as virtuous by the nomadic Arabs. In insisting on such acts the Qur'ân was thus not only "reviving one side of the old Arab ideal" but also providing for it a new sanction, that of "eschatological reward and punishment". The early passages of the Qur'ân provided "a source or channel for the creation of the new morality, namely, the revealed commands of God and the Prophet through whom they are revealed... The fact that the moral ideal is commanded by God is an additional sanction."[1]

What Watt says here about the abandonment of the ideal by the rich and proud Makkan leaders is perhaps true; but its generalization and application to the majority sections of the Makkan population of the time would be undoubtedly inappropriate. In saying, however, that the early passages of the Qur'ân provided a "moral" and a "sanction" for this old ideal in "eschatological reward and punishment" and in "the revealed commands of God and the Prophet through whom they are revealed", Watt strikes at the basic issue, though he does not openly recognize it. "Eschatological reward or punishment" and "revealed commands of God" could be a 'sanction' only if God's supremacy over all other forces and entites was first recognized and also if it was recognized that He was revealing Himself through His Messenger. That is precisely the recognition of the principle of *tawḥîd* and *risâslah*; and in the nature of things that was the starting point of all the other message or messages. Although Watt's conclusions point to this fact, yet he would not admit it and would instead have us believe that that fundamental issue was not explained in the early passages!

Similarly Watt fails to see the wood from the trees in his treatment of the *intellectual* situatin. He says that the Makkans, because of their wealth and prosperity, came to "have too high opinion of human powers and to forget man's creatureliness." The nomad also had a high opinion of human power, says Watt, but it was tempered by his belief in *fate* which according to him specially controlled his sustenance, the hour of his death, his worldly happiness or misery and the sex of a child.[2] After somewhat elaborating these statements Watt concludes that the early passages of the Qur'ân deal with these "intellectual problems" in that the facts ascribed by the pagan to Fate or Time (*dahr*) are ascribed to God. "God's power and goodness are shown

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

in causing plants to grow; that is precisely *rizq* or sustenance; God's power in creating man includes the determination of sex, though it is not explicitly mentioned. It is God who causes man to die, and on the Last day decides his ultimate happiness or misery."[1]

Once again it must be pointed out that what is identified as the intellectual attitude of the Makkans was perhaps the attitude only of a few of its rich individuals. The attitude of the generality of the Makkans and also that of the nomadic population were identical regarding *fate* and the four matters specially ascribed to it. Not only that. Even many of the rich Makkans did not at all abandon their faith in fate in respect of those matters. Most important of all, neither the rich and not-so-rich Makkans, nor the nomadic people had ceased to worship and propitiate the many gods and goddesses either for obtaining favour or warding off evil in respect of the four above mentioned matters. If, therefore, the Qur'ân was bringing those matters under the jurisdiction of God, as Watt recognizes, it was in fact only declaring His supremacy and power over those very special regions and was at the same time bringing home the futility and inefficacy of the gods and goddesses whom the Arabs, nomads and city-dwellers alike, were wont to worship and propitiate for the purpose. In other words, in this spehere also the early passages of the Qur'ân were only enunciating yet another aspect of the doctrine of *tawḥîd*.

But Watt seems to be so determined to overlook or sidetrack this fundamental fact that even in his treatment of the *Religious* situation in the fourth sub-section he studiously avoids making any mention of the Makkans' worship of the gods and goddesses. As if these latter did not exist in the Makkan religious situation or had dwindled into so much insignificance that no reference to them is called for in considering the religious situation! This is all the more strange because only a little later on we find Watt trying to convince us that the Makkan opposition to the Prophet was roused not by his denunciation of the leaders' selfishness and lack of generosity but by his denunciation of the idols! The only indirect reference to the idols in Watt's whole discussion on the religious situation is that the Makkans probably recognized in the acts of generosity, which was also in line with the ideal of *muru'ah*, something of the principle of sacrifice, "in just the same way as their forefathers had propitiated the pagan gods by the sacrifice

1. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

of animals."[1] We need not here question Watt's *volte-face*; for just a little earlier he has suggested that the ideal of generosity had been either lost sight of by the rich Makkans or was irrelevant to their new attitude! Be that as it may, by thus relegating the idols and their worship into the background Watt says that the religious aspect of pre-Islamic Makka was "concerned with that by which man live" and in which "they find the meaning and significance of life." But though the "old nomadic religion found the meaning of life in honour" and "in the maintènance of the tribe", continues Watt, "that religious attitude had broken down in Mecca because of the increasing individualism". There, says he, a new ideal, that of "supereminence in wealth" had replaced the ideal of honour. But this "was an ideal and a religion which might satisfy a few people for a generation or two", but it was "not likely to satisfy a large community for long"; for people would soon discover that there are indeed many things in life that money cannot buy. "The tensions due to the inadequacy of this religion of wealth", concludes Watt, "are perhaps felt most keenly by those who have some wealth, but are only on the fringes of the very wealthy," because they have the leisure and capacity for reflecting on "the limitations of the power of money."[2]

The last sentence is a foreboding of Watt's theory of struggle between the "haves and nearly hads" which he next unfolds and which has already been noticed. It may only be noted here that his drawing of the religious situation is extremely refracted and motivated, if not misleading, and it is totally noncognizant of the most obvious aspect of the Makkan religious situation, namely polytheism and idols, of which the Makkan élite were the champions and priestly class. Making all allowance for Watt's theory of the "religion of wealth", it cannot be said that the Makkans, not even the very rich of them, had turned atheists and totally god-less materialists. Nor did their mercantilism and supposed new individualism had obliterated the sense of tribal honour and system of social solidarity. Most important of all, they had not at all abandoned their forefathers' gods and goddesses. What is said by Watt here is in essence a repetition of what has been said in connection with the social, moral and intellectual situation. In making this repetition in a different form Watt appears to equate what he says as the social and moral ideals, particularly generosity and the ideal of tribal honour, with the religious atti-

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

tude. By so doing Watt reiterates that the early passages of the Qur'ân emphasize man's creatureliness, tell him of God's creating him and providing him with all that is necessary for a happy life, remind him that "to Him is the return" and exhort him to be grateful, to worship Him and to be generous. On the whole "the early passages of the Qur'ân culminate in teaching God's goodness and power (as Creator and Judge) and in exhorting man to acknowledge and express his dependence on God."[1]

Yes; the early passages do all these. But how does the emphasis on "God's goodness and power" and the exhortation to man to "acknowledge and express his dependence on God" really differ from an inculcation of the principle of absolute Unity of God (*tawḥîd*)? Not the least by simply omitting from the context the mention of the gods and goddesses. As already mentioned, the emphasis on God's goodness and power and on man's creatureliness is made not simply against the background of the "religion of wealth", but more against that of the other beliefs, practices and allegiances, particularly man's worship of the many imaginary gods and goddesses, including the wealth goddess. It was to all intents and purposes an inculcation of the doctrine of the absolute Unity of God and an exhortation to man to abandon allegiance to all the other gods and goddesses and to return to the One Only God in this world as indeed "to Him is the return" in the hereafter.

Finally a word about the theme of adoption or adaption by Islam of the pre-existing ideas and ideals such as generosity, fatalism, etc. It is good that these two, particularly generosity, were found among the Arabs. Or else the orientalists would certainly have spared no pains to find them in Greek-Syriac-Aramic or Judaeo-Christian traditions. The general allegation of the Qur'ân's having drawn and built on the pre-existing elements has already been dealt with.[2] It may only be emphasized here that neither the Qur'ân nor the Prophet claims to have introduced anything new; nor do they in any way attempt to conceal that fact. On the contrary, they ask man to accept their most important teaching, the doctrine of absolute monotheism, on the avowed ground that all the previous Prophets conveyed the same message.

1. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

2. *Supra*, Ch. XI. Watt here also draws the conclusion, under his section on *The Originality of the Qur'ân*, that in its use of the stories of the previous prophets the Qur'ân's originality lies not in the facts but "in its selection of points for emphasis" and that the term *'anbâ'* used in this connection denotes "significance" not facts. (*Ibid.*, pp. 80-85). The untenability of this suggestion has also been dealt with before. See *supra*, pp. 278-282.

Neither the Ka'ba nor the sanctuary at Jerusalem were built for the first time by the Prophet or his followers. They existed there for ages before the Prophet appeared. Similarly the institutions of prayer (*ṣalâh*), fasting, pilgimage and sacrifice were all there. Islam adopted and confirmed them not because, as the orientalists often say, they were Arab or pagan rites and practices, but because, as the Qur'ân and the Prophet very clearly assert, these also were introduced, under God's command, by the previous Prophets. The truth of these assertions is evident even from the sacred texts of the critics of Islam. That is why the Qur'ân and the Prophet often sought support for their assertions from those who knew the previous Books. It is therefore not of much importance to try to show how Islam built on previous materials. Of much more importance is to understand why it *avowedly* did so. It would then be seen that the real originality of the Qur'ân lies in its emphasis on the fact that a true recognition of the Unity of God involves also a recognition of the basic unity of mankind as a whole and the unity and identity of God's message to all the peoples at all times and climes. The Qur'ân holds that from time to time man deviated and deviates from the eternal and true message of God as communicated through all the Prophets. It recapitulates and codifies that message and asks man to return to the One Only God and to His true and eternal message. The Qur'ân is indeed revlevant not only to its contemporary situation; it is also relevant to the continuing situation of mankind.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE EARLY PHASE OF THE MISSION AND WATT'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTERPRETATION

It has been seen[1] that Watt assumes an acute trade rivalry between what he conceives to be a stronger group and a weaker group of Quraysh clans of Makka and attempts to explain developments like the *ḥarb al-fijâr* and the *ḥilf al-fuḍûl* in that context. He even suggests that before his call to Prophethood Muḥammad (ﷺ) was excluded from the "most lucrative trade" or he "might not have been so excluded". The faults and untenability of these assumptions have already been pointed out. In his treatment of the early phase of the Prophet's mission Watt introduces the same assumption, though not directly, but indirectly through a pseudo-socialistic formulation, namely, the struggle between "the haves and the nearly hads". He first makes some general observations about the early converts and then unfolds his main thesis. The present chapter takes into account this aspect of his socio-economic interpretation.

1. THE REMARKS REGARDING EARLY CONVERTS

Like his views regarding the early teachings of the Prophet, Watt's views about the earliest converts too sharply differ from those of Margoliouth. Thus, while the latter builds up his theory of "Islam as a secret society" largely on the basis of 'Abû Bakr's (r.a.) being one of the earliest, or rather the earliest, convert to Islam and his having introduced a number of converts to the Prophet, Watt calls in question both 'Abû Bakr's (r.a.) early conversion and his role in being instrumental in the conversion of a number of others. Watt does not, however, mention Margoliouth's name in this connection. In general he accepts Ibn Isḥâq's list of early Muslims as "roughly accurate", but says that since nobility in Islam "depended theoretically on service to the Islamic community" the "descendants" of particular converts made the most of "their ancestors' claims to merit in this respect". So, if it is claimed for anyone that "he was among the first twenty Muslims, it is usually safe to assume that he was about thirty-fifth".[2] In this connection Watt refers to the differences in the reports regarding the order of conversion of 'Alî, 'Abû

1. *Supra*, ch. IX.
2. *Ibid*., p. 86.

Bakr and Zayd ibn Ḥârithah and says that 'Abû Bakr's "later primacy has probably been reflected back into the early records" and that therefore Zayd ibn Ḥârithah "has probably the best claim to be regarded as the first male Muslim".[1] He also calls in question the fact of 'Abû Bakr's having introduced a group of five persons — 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân, Al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm, 'Abd al-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf, Sa'd ibn 'Abî Waqqâṣ and Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubayd Allah — to Islam. Watt points out that these were the very persons who, together with 'Alî, were nominated by 'Umar on the eve of his death to settle the question of succession to the *khilâfah.* Watt implies that this fact has been reflected in the account of their conversion and states: "It is hardly credible that, more than twenty years earlier, the same five should have come to Muḥammad as a group".[2] Watt also points out that of this group, 'Abd al-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf, is mentioned in another report as having embraced Islam along with a different group which included 'Uthmân ibn Maẓ'ûn and there are still other reports that speak of four others, Khâlid ibn Sa'îd, 'Abû Dharr, 'Amr ibn 'Abasah and Al-Zubayr, each claiming to be the fourth or fifth in the order of conversion.[3]

That the reports differ in respect of the order of conversion of the first three or four male converts is well-known. It is also true that there are reports regarding the four last named persons in which each claims to be the fourth or fifth convert. These differences in the reports only illustrate the fact that in each case the claimant was not aware of the exact time of or earlier conversion of the other. There is no evidence whatsoever to suggest that there was any conscious attempt to glorify someone at the cost of the other. Nor does it appear with regard to these four persons and 'Alî, Zayd and 'Abû Bakr that the claims to their early conversions were made by their descendants or admirers.

It is of course true that nobility in Islam depends on service to the cause of the Islamic community; but this latter characteristic is not coterminous with early conversion. Nor was a claim to nobility invariably based on a claim to early conversion, though the fact of early conversion is itself a distinctive merit and the early converts — *al-Sâbiqûn al-'Awwalûn* — have always been held in special esteem irrespective of whether any of them

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

attained prominence and position of primacy or not.

In saying that Zayd ibn Ḥârithah "has possibly the best claim to be regarded as the first male Muslim" Watt in fact echoes the view of Nöldeke whom he also cites in this connection. It may once again be emphasized here, however, that so far as ‘Alî, Zayd and 'Abû Bakr are concerned the reports are equally in favour of each to be considered the first male convert. As the first two were members of the Prophet's household, it may safely be assumed that outside that circle 'Abû Bakr was the first convert. Whatever might have been the case, it is clearly unjustifiable to say that his subsequent primacy has been reflected back into the records relating to his conversion. If such projection of subsequent primacy into the records of conversion of any person had ever taken place, it should have been so also in respect of ‘Umar who attained no less a position of primacy and nobility but who is not described in the records as having been even among the first forty converts.

As Watt himself notes, the list of early converts "contains the names of a number of people who were not prominent in later times".[1] Thus, the general picture that emerges is that while there are persons who subsequently became prominent in Islam but for whom no claim to early conversion has been made while there are others who, notwithstanding their not being prominent are nonetheless reckoned among the very early converts. The only reasonable conclusion is that there does not appear to be any valid reason for suspecting the records of one or two who attained primacy and are also described as very early converts.

Similarly groundless is the suspicion about the five persons whom 'Abû Bakr is reported to have introduced to Islam. The very fact that ‘Umar selected them for settling the question of succession, far from its being reflected into the records of those persons' conversion, is rather a confirmation of their early conversion and a proof of their integrity, sincerity and devotion to the cause of Islam; for ‘Umar, being their contemporary and fellow-citizen, both before his own conversion and after it, must have been quite conscious of their antecedents and character when he made his selection. It is also not quite correct to say, as Watt does, that these five persons came to the Prophet "as a group" seeking conversion. All that is discernible from the reports is that 'Abû Bakr persuaded them to embrace Islam and introduced them, not all at a time, to the Prophet.

1. *Ibid.*

II. THE PSEUDO-SOCIALISTIC CASTING

In surveying the early converts Watt emphasizes their socio-economic background in order to identify their motives and reasons for accepting Islam. For that purpose he indicates the relative positions of the clans within the community as a whole and also the positions of the individual converts within their respective clans. His appraisal of the clans is as follows:

Hâshim: Under "Abû Ṭâlib's leadership it was losing ground".[1]

Al-Muṭṭalib: "This clan had apparently become very weak and was much dependent on Hâshim".[2]

Taym: "This clan also counted for little in the affairs of Mecca".[3]

Zuhrah: It "seems to have been more prosperous than those of Taym and al-Muṭṭâlib"; and it had business and matrimonial relations with the clan of 'Abd Shams.[4]

'Adiyy; Its general position "was probably also deteriorating". "No members of the clan other than 'Umar seem to have been of much consequence in Mecca".[5]

Al-Ḥârith ibn Fihr: "Its position had perhaps been improving, but it was not of first importance".[6]

'Âmir: "About the time of the Hijrah it seems to have been improving its position" but its general status was like that of Al-Ḥârith ibn Fihr.[7]

Asad: It "had evidently grown in importance", left its old associates of the *Ḥilf al-Fuḍûl* and entered "the circles of 'big business'".[8]

Nawfal: Though not strong in numbers "its leading men had considerable influence" and worked in association with 'Abd Shams and Makhzûm.[9]

1. *Ibid.*, 88.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, 89.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, 91.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, 92.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*

'Abd Shams: It "disputed with that of Makhzûm the leading place in Mecca", but "the rivalry was not unduly bitter".[1]

Makhzûm: "The Makhzûm were apparently the dominant political group in Mecca..."[2]

Sham: "Sahm was one of the more powerful clans".[3]

Jumaḥ: "This clan was also powerful, but not quite so powerful as Sahm".[4]

'Abd al-Dâr: Once foremost but "now counted for little in Meccan affairs".[5]

It would appear that, according to Watt's appraisal, roughly 7 out of the 14 clans mentioned were more or less prominent and powerful, while the other seven were not so. In the first category would come Makhzûm, 'Abd Shams, Sahm, Jumaḥ, Nawfal, Asad and Zuhrah; whereas in the second category would come Hâshim, Al-Muṯṯalib, Taym, 'Adiyy, Al-Ḥârith ibn Fihr, 'Âmir and 'Abd al-Dâr. Watt specifically mentions a little over 60 persons as early converts from these clans, including their confederates (*ḥulafâ'*). He also indicates the individual status of a number of converts within their respective clans. Having done this he divides the "principal early Muslims" into three classes — (i) *Younger sons of the best families*, "men from the most influential families of the most influential clans"; (ii) *Men, mostly young, from other families*, "not sharply distinguished from the previous one" and (iii) *Men, without close ties to any clan* — "a comparatively small number" of converts.[6] Watt does not distinguish the confederates as a separate class, saying that converts from them mostly fall in the second class.[7]

Having thus surveyed the clans and the converts from them Watt makes two points. He says that "young Islam was essentially a movement of young men" and, secondly, "it was *not* a movement of the 'down and outs', of the scum of the population" but it drew its support "from those about the middle who", realizing the disparity between them and those at the top, felt that they

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

were underprivileged. "It was", concludes Watt, "not so much a struggle between 'haves' and 'have nots' as between 'haves' and 'nearly hads'".[1]

II. THE FACTS BELIE THE FICTION

Now, it is true that most of the early converts were young men. This point, as Watt acknowledges, has already been emphasized by an Egyptian writer.[2] It is also true that Islam was not a movement of the 'down and outs', of the scum of the population. But the conclusion, which is particularly Watt's own, that it was a sort of a struggle between "haves" and "nearly hads", is not tenable; for the basis of the assertion, that the majority or even a sizeable number of the early converts were those who had laboured under a sense of disparity between them and those at the top and felt themselves underprivileged is not made out even by the facts adduced by Watt himself. The assumption is not applicable even with regard to the converts from the less prominent clans. It is noteworthy that of the 60 or so converts sepcifically mentioned by Watt more than forty appear, according to his own enumeration, from among the more influential and prosperous clans, whereas less than a half of that number appear from the other group of clans. Even with regard to this latter group of converts Watt admits: "as we move down the scale to the weaker clans and to the weaker branches of the chief clans, we find among the Muslims men of greater influence within their clan or family".[3] The allusion is obviously to such persons as 'Abû Bakr, 'Umar, Ṭalḥah and 'Abd al-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf, about whom Watt specifically mentions their prominent positions within their respective clans.[4] It cannot be assumed that such influential men of the so-called weaker clans smarted under a sense of their disparity with those of the richer and more powerful clans. For, in that case, the sense of dissatisfaction would have been more general and more acute among the ordinary members of those weaker clans and we should have found a wider initial response to Islam from among those people. But that is not at all the case.

Watt attempts to show with regard to a number of converts from both the weaker and stronger clans that those converts occupied rather "inferior" positions within their respective clans or families. His obvious intention

1. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
2. *Ibid.*, p.96, citing 'Abd al-Muta'âl al-Ṣa'îdî's *Shabâb al-Quraysh*. Cario, 1947.
3. Watt, *op. cit.*, p. 95.
4. See *ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

behind the attempt is to prepare the ground for the theory of struggle between 'haves' and 'nearly hads'. The arguments adduced in each case, however, are either not at all convincing or merely conjectural. For instance, speaking about the three early converts from the clan of 'Abd Shams, 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân, 'Abû Ḥudhayfah ibn 'Utbah ibn Rabî'ah and Khâlid ibn Sa'îd ibn al-'Âṣ ('Abû Uḥayḥah), Watt states as follows. He says that "'Uthmân's immediate forebears were not prominent and he "probably felt envious of his richer and more powerful relatives".[1] No specific fact is mentioned to support this supposed envy on 'Uthmân's part. With regard to the two other persons Watt says that though they were sons of leading men of the clan, the fact that their mothers were from Kinânah, "a poor relative of Quraysh, suggests that they were inferior memebrs of their families".[2] It is not understandable why their fathers, in spite of their having married in the supposedly poor clan, did not suffer any diminution in their status and continued to be leaders of their clan and why their sons should have been regarded as inferior members of their families on the same score. Moreover, even if inferior memebers in their own families, as sons respectively of the two foremost leaders of the clan the general status of both 'Abû Ḥudhayfah and Khâlid was in no way inferior to, if not better than, that of any other youth within or outside their clan. Of Khunays ibn Ḥudhayfah ibn Qays of Banû Sahm Watt observes that "presumably" he belonged to "one of the less important branches of the clan".[3] Once again, there is no mention of the basis for this presumption. Similarly, with regard to six other converts of the same clan, all of them sons of Al-Ḥârith ibn Qays, one of the leaders of the clan and all of whom migrated to Abyssinia, Watt says that "after the death of al-Ḥârith his family found it difficult to maintain their position."[4] Obviously, on their conversion, the sons of Al-Ḥârith found it difficult to maintain their position in Makka; but that situation was a result of their conversion and not at all anterior to it. Nor could migration to Abyssinia be conceivably a contrivance to retrieve the family status. Similarly characteristic is Watt's argument regarding the status of some of the converts from his less important clans. Thus, with reference to Ja'far ibn 'Abî Ṭâlib and Ḥamzah ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, of Banû Hâshim, Watt could lay his hand on

1. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
4. *Ibid.*

no other fact than their marriage. He says that the "inferior position" of both in the clan "is shown by the fact that they had wives from the nomadic tribe of Khath'am".[1] Clearly, such arguments are not sufficient to substantiate the prevalence of a sense of dissatisfaction over a supposedly underprivileged status affecting youths from influential and uninfluential clans alike. It may also be pointed out that clans like Kinânah were not at all lower in social rank, nor was any stigma attached to marriage with poor or nomadic tribes. Even sons of slave-maids like 'Antara ibn Shaddâd could attain the most respectable position in the Arabian society.

Even if we accept Watt's statements regarding the personal status of individual converts and also take into account his other suggestion that there was by that time a slackening of the clan's hold over its members and a corresponding growth of individualism[2] so that an ambitious young man did not always identify his personal interests with those of his clan and sought improvement of his lot in other channels, that would constitute only half of the argument. For, in order to prove Watt's theory it is necessary also to show that the early messages of Islam offered immediate and sure prospects for the 'nearly hads' to elevate themselves to the status of the 'haves'. But except for showing from some early Qur'ânic passages that there was a denunciation of extreme materialism and inordinate love for wealth on the part of the Quraysh leaders, and an exhortation to attend to the traditional duty of care for the poor, the orphan and the needy, and fairness in trade dealings, particularly in matters of weight and measure, no other particular economic reform programme aimed at improving the position of the 'nearly hads' could be made out from those passages. It cannot be argued that reforms in the above mentioned lines would help such young men in improving their lot in any way so that they instantly relegated their primary allegiance to their clans and families to the background and gave up their ancestral beliefs and worships. Nor is there any instance of an early convert's having by his conversion immediately improved his material position. On the contrary, persons like 'Abû Bakr had to spend their fortunes for the sake of protecting the poor and helpless converts, while others like Ṣuhayb ibn Sinân did not hesitate to abandon their hard-earned wealth to the cupidity of the Quraysh instead of shutting their eyes to the light they had seen. And so

1. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
2. See *ibid.*, pp. 18-20.

far as expatriates and persons of no clan-connection were concerned, almost all of them suffered persecution and loss of trade and profession in consequence of their conversion to Islam. Surely the spectacle is not at all illustrative of a group of nearly-hads' struggle for attaining the status of the 'haves'.

In fact Watt himself exculdes most of the converts from the range of his theory when, after having propounded it, he considers "more fully" the early converts' reasons for responding to the Prophet's call. Thus, to begin with, he refers to the *ḥanîfs* and says that prior to the Prophet's call "a tendency towards a vague monotheism had been widespread" and that for persons like 'Ubayd Allah ibn Jaḥsh, 'Uthmân ibn Maẓ'ûn and Sa'îd ibn Zayd ibn 'Amr Islam acted "as a centre of integration for these vague and nebulous tendencies".[1] Watt next says that though the question of economic facts "is relevant to this early monotheistic tendency", it could be "most conveniently discussed" in connection with those who had taken no definite steps to break with paganism.[2] But then, with regard to the first of the three classes he distinguished — "the younger sons of the best families" — Watt states that there was "probably no explicit awareness that economic and political factors were involved in what they were doing".[3] Speaking particularly of Khâlid ibn Sa'îd of this group Watt observes that he (Khâlid) "was presumably conscious only of religious reason when he became a Muslim" and that the growing concentration of wealth in few hands could have only an unsettling effect upon him in that it made him aware of the need for a religious faith.[4] In this connection Watt recalls Khâlid's dream in which he saw himself standing on the brink of a pit of fire, his father trying to push him into it while another person preventing him from falling. Watt thinks that this dream probably means that Khâlid's father was forcing him to "enter the whirlpool of Meccan finance which he regarded as soul-destroying".[5] "Whatever the truth of this matter", concludes Watt, "his conscious thought appears to have been entirely on the religious plane".[6] Thus does Watt say that his first class of converts were not really actuated by economic motives.

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, 97.
5. *Ibid.*, 97-98.
6. *Ibid.*, 98.

He next refers to the cases Ḥamzah and 'Umar (r.a.) who, according to his appraisal of the clans, are to be taken as representing his second class of converts. With regard to both of them Watt observes that "loyalty to the family or clan was involved" in the process of their conversion. While Ḥamzah (r.a.) was roused to defend his nephew "from injury and insults at the hands and mouths of another clan", 'Umar's (r.a.) rage against his sister and her husband was due, according to Watt, to his worry and anxiety "through the fear that their conversion might lead to a further deterioration of the general position of the clan".[1] Watt further observes that there "is no whisper of economics" in the matter of 'Umar's conversion.[2]

Thus, by Watt's own admission, Ḥamzah and 'Umar, (r.a.) two representatives respectively of two of his second category of clans, though spurred into action by their clan spirit, were not at all actuated by economic motives in embracing Islam. Particularly 'Umar, as Watt notes, feared that the conversion of his sister and her husband, "might lead to a further deterioration[3] of the general position of the clan". The attitude here recognized by Watt is clearly the very antithesis of the nearly hads' intention to improve their material position by conversion to Islam.

Watt next moves on to a consideration of his third category of converts and says that they were influenced more by their insecurity "than by any prospect of economic or political advantage".[4] Watt then observes that if hopes of economic reform were present among the early Muslims, "we should expect to find them in the second class", adding that the early passages of the Qur'ân speak of such reforms and that the whole message is relevant to the total Makkan situation. He further observes: "It would not be surprising if some men were attracted chiefly by the political and economic implication of the message. Yet it is unlikely that there were many such".[5]

Of course it "would not be surprising if some men" were actuated by mundane motives in changing their faiths; but since, in Watt's own words, "it is unlikely that there were many such", it is only surprising that none-

1. *Ibid.*

2. *Ibid.*

3. The expression "further deterioration" is in line with Watt's characterization of Banû 'Adiyy as a second-rate clan.

4. Watt, *op. cit.*, 98.

5. *Ibid.*

theless Watt virtually generalizes this admittedly slender *probability* in order to sustain the theory of a struggle between the "haves" and the "nearly hads". In fact this last mentioned remark of his is a desperate attempt on his part to save his theory against an overwhelming array of facts he cannot but admit. His reference to the economic aspects of the early Qur'ânic passages is also a poor attempt to save the theory; for, as already pointed out, the economic reforms envisaged in the early passages of the Qur'ân could in no way be said to have been aimed at improving the position of the "nearly hads". Nor is the question of relevance of the Qur'ânic teachings to the contemporary situation, which has been examined earlier, of any avail in substantiating the theory.

III. AN OLD WINE IN A NEW BOTTLE

In sum, according to Watt's own analysis, the situation was as follows:

(i) His first class of converts, the "younger sons of best families", constitutes almost two-thirds of a total of about sixty of the very early converts. They were not actuated by any economic motive but by religious motive alone in embracing Islam. In fact there could not be any question of their joining the Islamic movement for elevating themselves to the position of the "haves", for they were already the "haves". This fact of the majority of the very early converts being from among the sons of the best families decisively belies the theory of a struggle between the haves and the nearly hads.

(ii) As regards Watt's second class of converts, namely, young men from other families "not sharply distinguished from the previous one", he says that if hopes of economic reform were present among the early Muslims "we should expect to find them" in that class. Yet he specifically mentions the cases of only two, Ḥamzah and 'Umar (r.a.) who, by implication belonged to that class but who admittedly were not actuated by economic considerations. Watt does not mention by name anyone else of this class who embraced Islam clearly from economic motives. In any case, this class together with the third formed only a minority of the early converts.

(iii) As regards his third class, "men without close ties to any clan", Watt says that their number was "comparatively small" and they were influenced more by their insecurity "than by any prospect of economic or political advantage".

It must not be supposed that Watt mentions all these facts by way of nullifying his theory. On the contrary he has a clear aim which he presents as a

sort of grand-total of the theory of struggle between haves and the nearly hads. After having surveyed all the above mentioned facts Watt says that it was only the Prophet and "the wiser among his followers" who were conscious of the socio-political and economic implications of his message and that these certainly weighed with them when they directed the affairs of the Muslims, though "it was on the religious plane that men were summoned to Islam" and that most of the converts also were actuated only by religious motives. The Prophet, says Watt, was "in no wise a socialistic reformer but the inaugurator of a new religion" and that while he was conscious of the religious, socio-political and economic ills of his time, "he regarded the religious aspect as the fundamental one and concentrated on it".[1] It was "on the religious plane that men were summoned to Islam" and that this determined the ethos of the men who responded to his call and who "took their religious beliefs and practices with deadly seriousness". "Conscious thoughts about economics and politics" hardly played any part in the process of their conversion.[2] Yet, says Watt, "Muḥammad and the wiser among his followers must have been alive to the social and political implications of his message, and that, in directing the affairs of the Muslims, such considerations certainly weighed with them".[3]

Now, if this is the sum and substance of the elaborately built up theory of struggle between the haves and the nearly hads, it is hardly necessary to point out that this view is scarcely different from that of many of Watt's predecessors who say in so many ways that the Prophet, being aware of the socio-economic and religious ills of his society, embarked upon a programme of reform which, though essentially religious in nature, nonetheless aimed at bettering the political and economic position of his own and the so-called second-rate clans. It may also be mentioned here that the Prophet's deadliest adversary, 'Abû Jahl, viewed the Prophet's cause in the light of Banû Makhzûm's competition with Banû Hâshim for prominence and leadership.[4] The orientalists adopt more or less the same view and try to relate the rise of Islam in one way or other to the inter-clan rivalry of Quraysh. To this traditional, simplistic and rather long-exploded view Watt attempts to add the dimension of a speudo-socialistic theory of struggle between the

1. *Ibid.*, 99.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. See *infra*, pp.618-619.

"haves" and the "nearly hads". By his assumtion of an acute trade rivalry between two groups of Quraysh clans, by his theory of a growth of individualism among the Makkan mercantile élite, by his discussion on the relative positions of the clans in which he assigns a second-rate position to the Prophet's clan (Banû Hâshim), by his attempted identification of the individual status of the converts within their respective clans and families and yet saying that they were not really actuated by economic motives in embracing Islam and, above all, by his grandiloquent theory of struggle between the 'haves' and the 'nearly hads' Watt merely serves the old and stale wine in a glitteringly new bottle.

In doing so, however, Watt not only fails to give a really dispassionate explanation for the rise of Islam but underestimates the members of his "best families" too. He says that the younger sons of those families were not conscious of the political and economic implications of Islam and were actuated by religious motives. This is not true, and it could not be true; for persons like 'Abû Jahl did not fail to see the political implications of the Prophet's mission and did not cease pointing these out to their people. In fact the young men of those families were as much aware as 'Abû Jahl and his sort were that the acceptance of Islam meant the acceptance of the Prophet's leadership in all matters, religious and temporal alike. Yet, those young men embraced Islam not because of their "individualism" born out of material considerations but because their love for the truth transcended their all other considerations.

On the other hand, there was no question of the so-called second-rate clans', particularly the Prophet's clan Banû Hâshim's not understanding the matter, since at least 'Abû Jahl openly considered it an issue of leadership between his clan and Banû Hâshim. Yet neither its leader 'Abû Ṭâlib nor the vast majority of its other members embraced Islam. On the contrary one of its leaders, 'Abû Lahab, even ranged himself against the Prophet. Clearly, this attitude of the leadership and generality of Banû Hâshim was due to the fact that they did not, in spite of 'Abû Jahl's fulminations, make the Prophet's mission an issue of leadership between Banû Hâshim and Banû Makhzûm because they were confident of their nobility and position of primacy in the Makkan society whether a Prophet arose from among them or not and because their attachment to their ancestral religion superseded their other considerations.

And since the leaders and generality of Banû Hâshim did not view the Prophet's mission as an issue for leadership between them and Banû Makhzûm, there was no question of the Prophet's having launched the movement for obtaining leadership either for himself or his clan. He and the "wiser" among his followers were of course conscious of the political implications of Islam; but the fulfilment of those implications was never their primary or secondary motive. They were not actuated by the prospects of any material advantage that might accrue to them in the event of the success of Islam. In fact the Qur'ân, in reply to this very specific accusation of the unbelieving Makkan leaders, repeatedly pointed out that neither leadership nor material gains were the Prophet's motive, nor were those the real points at issue. This fact of the Qur'ân's denial of the accusation is in itself a clear proof that the political implications of the Prophet's mission were no subtle secret understood only by the Prophet and his close associates, as Watt suggests. His theory is merely a recapitualtion in another form of the Makkan unbelievers' accusation and it similarly fails to grasp the real point at issue. That no political or material motives impelled the Prophet is best illustrated by the fact that when the time came for reaping the fruits of success he did not limit the privilege to the members of his own clan or the group of the so-called 'nearly hads'.[1]

1. See also *supra*, Chaps. IV, IX.

SECTION VI
THE MAKKAN OPPOSITION

CHAPTER XXV

THE MAKKAN OPPOSITION: NATURE, CAUSES AND IMMEDIATE ALLEGATION

(I) NATURE OF OPPOSITION

The reaction to the Messenger's call was three-fold. There were a number of good souls from among the aristocratic class as well as from the common people of Makka who readily accepted the truth, became converts to the new faith and dedicated their lives and resources to the cause. Secondly, the majority of the Makkan people, particularly the leaders, were for various reasons opposed to the Prophet's mission. Some of them were stubborn opponents who set themselves tooth and nail to stop the spread of the new faith and to nip it in the bud. There were others who were more or less moderate in their attitude and were at times inclined to come to terms with the new movement. Thirdly, outside the town of Makka and its vicinity, and the town of Ṭâ'if, the attitude of the tribes, when they came to know about the movement, was generally one of passiveness or sincere inquisitiveness. It was mainly the Makkan aristocrats who organized and led the opposition to the Messenger and instigated the Makkan populace and, at times, some of the non-Makkan tribes against him. Till the migration to Madina, thus, the opposition to him and to Islam was essentially the opposition of the Makkan aristocratic and priestly class.

This role of the Makkan leaders will be pretty clear as we proceed with the story of opposition. The Qur'ân bears an eloquent testimony to this role of theirs in a number of its passages. The following may be mentioned by way of illustration. They all give a graphic description of the leaders' and their followers' position in the hereafter on account of their opposition to the Prophet and their rejection of the truth.

(a) 34:31-33: (*Sûrat Saba'*)

﴿ ...ولو ترىٰ إذ الظـٰلمون موقوفون عند ربهم يرجع بعضهم إلىٰ بعض القول يقول الذين استضعفوا للذين استكبروا لولا أنتم لكنا مؤمنين * قال الذين استكبروا للذين استضعفوا أنحن صددناكم عن الهدىٰ بعد إذ جآءكم بل كنتم مجرمين * وقال الذين استضعفوا للذين استكبروا بل مكر اليل والنهار إذ تأمروننا أن نكفر بالله ونجعل له، أندادا وأسروا الندامة لما رأوا العذاب... ﴾ (٣٤: ٣١-٣٣)

"... If you could see the transgressors when they will be made to stand before their Lord, hurling the word (the blame), one to the other — those who had been dom-

ineered over saying to the arrogant ones (the leaders), 'Had it not been for you, we would surely have been believers.' The arrogant ones will say (in reply) to those who were domineered over, 'Was it we who barred you from the guidance when it came to you? No, rather you yourselves were sinners.' And those who were domineered over will say to the arrogant ones, 'No, it was a conspiracy by day and night (on your part) when you commanded us to disbelieve in Allah and to set up equals to him.' And they will (thus) express regrets when they faced the punishment..." (34:31-33)

(b) 33:67-68:

﴿وقالوا ربنا إنا أطعنا سادتنا وكبرآءنا فأضلونا السبيلا * ربنا ءاتهم ضعفين من العذاب والعنهم لعنا كبيرا﴾ (٣٣: ٦٧-٦٨)

"And they will say: 'Our Lord, we obeyed our chiefs and great ones thus they misled us as to the rigth path. Our Lord, subject them to a redoubled punishment and curse them with the most abominable curse!'"

(c) 40:47-48:

﴿وإذ يتحآجّون فى النار فيقول الضعفـٰٓؤا للذين استكبروا إنا كنا لكم تبعا فهل أنتم مغنون عنا نصيبا من النار * قال الذين استكبروا إنا كل فيها إن الله قد حكم بين العباد﴾ (٤٠: ٤٧-٤٨)

"And (behold) they will dispute, one with the other in the fire. Thus the weak ones (who followed) will say to those who had been arrogant: 'We only followed you; will you then relieve us by taking on yourselves some portion of the hell-fire?' Those who had been arrogant will say (in reply): ' We all are in it (fire)! Truly Allah has adjudged between His servants.' " (40:47-48).[1]

The opposition to the Prophet's mission started since its very beginning. This is clear, among other things, from the instances of oppression upon 'Abû Bakr and Ṭalḥah on their conversion and the secret manner in which the Muslims used to perform their prayers in solitary valleys in order to avoid being harassed and oppressed by the unbelievers.[2] These incidents were by all accounts previous to the taking of Dâr al-Arqam as the venue of their meetings and prayers. While mentioning these very facts Ibn Isḥâq states at the same time that the unbelievers did not turn against the Messenger of Allah until he began to mention and abuse theire gods and goddesses.[3] This statement of Ibn Isḥâq's does not mean that there was an initial period when the Messenger of Allah had remained silent about the gods and goddesses and had not made any attack upon their worship. Rejection of the

1. See also Q. 6:123; 14:21 and 38:5-7.
2. Ibn Hishâm, p. 264.
3. *Ibid.*

gods and goddesses and the worship of Allah Alone were implicit in the very doctrine of *tawḥîd* with which the mission started. It was also a natural corollary of the directive to the Prophet to get up and warn his people and proclaim the supremacy of his Lord, as contained in Q. 74:2-3. The directive is unanimously regarded as the beginning of the call to preach (*risâlah*). In view of these facts Ibn Isḥâq's statement means that the Makkan leaders started their opposition in a determined manner and began to organize themselves for the purpose as soon as they realized the threat posed by the new movement to their position as the priestly class and guardians of the Ka'ba, the central shrine where the principal gods and goddesses of the Arabs were housed. In fact this statement of Ibn Isḥâq's is in consonance with his other statement that open or public preaching of Islam began at the end of the third year of the mission. If these two statements are collated it would be clear that determined and organized opposition began with the inception of public propagation. Previous to that the opposition to the faith was mainly on family and individual level and was rather in the nature of family disciplining and chastisement of its renegades, though, at times, there was also group opposition, as seen in the incident leading to the taking of Dâr al-Arqam as the Muslims' meeting place.

As regards the leaders of opposition, Ibn Sa'd gives a fairly comprehensive list of them. This list is more or less confirmed by the other accounts, including that of Ibn Isḥâq, wherein the names of the principal opponents occur in connection with the description of various events. Arranged clan-wise, the list stands as follows :

1. Abû Lahab - Banû Hâshim
2. Abû Jahl - Banû Makhzûm
3. Al-Walîd ibn al-Mughîrah - " "
4. 'Abû Qays ibn al-Fâkih - " "
5. Zuhair ibn 'Abî 'Umayyah - " "
6. Al Sâ'ib ibn Ṣayfiyy ibn 'Âbid - " "
7. Al- Aswad ibn 'Abd al-Asad - " "
8. Al- Aswad ibn 'Abd Yaghûth - Banû Zuhrah
9. Al- Ḥârith ibn Qays ibn 'Addiy - Banû 'Addiy

(otherwise known as Ibn al-Ghayṭalah)

10. 'Umayyah ibn Khalaf	-	Banû Jumaḥ
11. 'Ubayy ibn Khalaf (brother of the above)	-	" "
12. Al-'Âṣ ibn Wâ'il	-	Banû Sahm
13. Munabbih ibn al-Ḥajjâj	-	" "
14. Al-Naḍr ibn al-Ḥârith	-	Banû 'Abd al- Dâr
15. Al-'Âṣ ibn Sa'îd ibn al-'Âṣ	-	Banû 'Umayyah (Banû 'Abd Shams)
16. 'Uqbah ibn 'Abî Mu'ayṭ	-	" "
17. Ibn al-Aṣdâ al-Ḥudhalî	-	" "
18. Al-Ḥakam ibn 'Abî al-'Aṣ	-	" "
19. Al -'Âṣ ibn Hâshim (Abû al-Bakhtarî)	-	Banû Asad
20. 'Addiyy ibn al-Ḥamrâ'	-	Banû Thaqîf

Of these persons the most inveterate enmeies of the Prophet were 'Abû Jahl, 'Abû Lahab and 'Uqbah ibn 'Abî Mu'ayṭ. Ibn Sa'd also mentions 'Utbah ibn Rabî'ah and his brother Shaybah ibn Rabî'ah of Banû 'Abd Shams and 'Abû Sufyân of Banû 'Umayyah as leaders of the opposition but says that they were of the moderate type.[1] The way 'Utbah beat 'Abû Bakr to unconsciousness does not show him to be quite moderate in attitude, though his subsequent role would confirm Ibn Sa'd's assessment. Similarly, whatever might have been 'Abu Sufyân's earlier activities, his subsequent role does not mark him out to be a moderate opponent. Of all the persons mentioned here, however, it was only he and Al-Ḥakam ibn 'Abî al-'Âṣ who ultimately embraced Islam. There were of course other leaders who are not mentioned here, such as the Lion of Qurysh, Nawfal ibn Khuwaylid ibn Asad of Banû Asad, and Suhayl ibn 'Umayr of Banû 'Âmir ibn Lu'ayy. The last named person was indeed a very notable figure among Quraysh. It was he who concluded, on their behalf, the treaty of Ḥudaybiyah with the Prophet.

The situation for these leaders was indeed difficult and complex. Hitherto they had been used only to the traditional pattern of tribal conflict and strug-

1. Ibn Sa'd, I, pp. 200-201.

gle for blood vengeance. For the first time in their history, and probably in human history as a whole, a group of conservative leaders were all of a sudden confronted with an array of revolutionary ideas that aimed at transforming their whole society and social relationships. Hence their response and reaction to the situation was always multi-faceted, mostly confused and at times desperate. Well might 'Abû Jahl attempt to champion the cause of Banû Makhzûm against Banû Hâshim, but he could not shut his eyes, nor those of the others, to the stark fact that a number of persons from his own clan, including his half-brother, had not only gone over to the new faith but also an important member of the clan like Arqam ibn Abî al-Arqam had turned his own house into a sanctuary and meeting place for the Muslims. Similarly 'Utbah ibn Rabî'ah, though he could beat 'Abû Bakr to unconsciousness, found himself in opposition to his own capable son, 'Abû Ḥudhayfah, who was one of the very early converts to Islam. The same was the position with the Lion of Quraysh, Nawfal ibn Khuwylid ibn Asad of Banû Asad who, though he tied 'Abû Bakr and Ṭalḥah together as punishment for their conversion, thus making them life-long comrades in conscience and sufferance, met his nemesis in the very early conversion of his own son, Al-Aswad ibn Nawfal, to Islam. These are only a few instances showing how clans and families were divided against themselves over the issue. Clearly the old pattern of rivalries and confrontation was unworkable in the situation.

The complexity of the situation naturally led to a complexity of manouevres and methods adopted by the opposition. Quite naturally they attempted to belittle and ignore the movement, even to silence it by taunting and ridiculing the Prophet. At the same time they applied more serious means, such as using force and torture upon those whom they could. They put various types of pressure upon Banû Hâshim and Banû al-Muṭṭalib to stop the Prophet. Sometimes they made offers of compromise, at other times they resolved to kill him and actually made several attempts to do so. Simultaneously, they used arguments and objections against him, levelled a number of allegation against him and also demanded that he perform miracles and other unusual feats. These manoeuvres and steps, it must be noted, do not constitute stages in the development of opposition; they rather indicate the itmes and types of antagonism resorted to by the leaders; for all these methods appear to have been adopted almost from the beginning.

So far as the task of the leaders with regard to themselves and their allies

was concerned, it was two-fold. They had, on the one hand, to make the clans, or rather their chiefs and heads of families, unite in opposition to the Prophet and his clan who, under the leadership of 'Abû Ṭâlib, stood solidly (except 'Abû Lahab) in protecting him (the Prophet). On the other hand the leaders had also to make the clans turn against those of their own members who embraced Islam; and that too not simply for punishing and torturing them but for disowning and excommunicating them; thus throwing them out of the pale of their respective clan-protection. In this latter process the leaders had per force to organize their opposition on a rather ideological line, i.e. on the issue of Islam which confronted them. In doing so they in effect helped undermine the very system they sought to uphold. For when men were told to subordinate their clan, family and even filial considerations to the cause of opposing an issue, they would be inevitably led on, in their heart of hearts, to making a comparative assessment of the issues they stood for and against. Like many other historical instituations and episodes, thus, the Makkan opposition contained in its bosom the germs of its own death.

The work of consolidating their ranks against their own renegades appears to have been accomplished by the leaders in the course of a little more then a year after the beginning of public propagation by the Prophet. In consequence of this development the converts from those very clans to which the leaders belonged found their position so insecure by the beginning of the fifth year of the mission that many of them, for the sake of survival, migrated to Abyssinia in the middle of that very year. On the other hand, the forging of such unity among themselves enabled the leaders to turn combinedly against Banû Hâshim and Banû al-Muṭṭalib as a whole. This they succeeded in doing by the end of the sixth year which resulted in the famous boycott and blockade of the latter at the end of the sixth or from the beginning of the seventh year. Before discussing these developments, it would be worthwhile to indicate the main causes of the opposition and its manners and manoeuvres.

(II) THE CAUSES OF OPPOSITION

Ibn Isḥâq's above mentioned statement[1] in fact alludes to the chief cause of the Makkan leaders' opposition to the Prophet's mission. They had built up their socio-religious and commercial life round the Ka'ba. It was on account of this shrine that Makka had indeed become the religious and com-

1. *Supra*, p. 610.

mercial centre of Arabia. The Makkan leaders, by virtue of their position as guardians of the Ka'ba, had obtained the position of priests and religious leaders of the Arabian tribes scattered throughout the land and had utilized that position to emerge as the commercial élite of Arabia. Makka itself and the different fairs and market-places in the neighbouring area prospered on account of the Ka'ba and the various religious ceremonies, including *ḥajj*, connected with it. Taking advantage of the long-standing rivalry and conflict between the Persian and the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) empires the Quraysh leaders of Makka had establised their position as the middle-man of the whole trade between the east and the west. They obtained from the south and the eastern Arabian ports the commodities coming from east Africa, India, China and the Far east and carried them to Syria and delivered them to the merchants of the Roman Empire. Similarly they obtained from the Syrian markets the commodities of the then known western world and carried them to the south and eastern Arabian ports whereform these were taken over by the Asian and African merchants. In order to carry on this lucrative trade the Quraysh leaders had established alliances with the Arabian tribes lying along the trade routes, sometimes paying them resonable considerations in the shape of presents and cash for their cooperation and support in ensuring the safe passage of the goods and caravans through their respective territories. A surer guarantee for their adhesion and alliance lay, however, in their religious ties with the Ka'ba and in the Quraysh leaders' position as its guardians.

When, therefore, they were asked to abandon the worship of the idols the Makkan leaders saw in it a threat to their position as the priestly class and guardians of the Ka'ba and, in consequence a threat also to their commercial and economic position. They apprehended that if they accepted the Prophet's call they would not only lose the adhesion of the tribes but, in all likelihood, would face a tribal coalition and revolt against them aiming at ousting them and installing others as guardians of the Ka'ba. The Makkan leaders thus feared the loss of their trade, their socio-religious position and even their domicile at and dominion over Makka, the religious and commercial centre of all Arabia.

They did not in fact make any secret of this apprehension of theirs. When 'Abû Lahab stated at the Prophet's first banquet that Banû Hâshim and the other Quraysh clans were not in a position to face the cambined opposition

of all the tribes of Arabia, he really voiced this apprehension of the Makkan leaders. The Qur'an also clearly refers to this apprehension on their part as follows: ﴿ وقالوا إن نتبع الهدىٰ معك نتخطف من أرضنا ﴾

"And they say, if we followed the guidance with you , we would be ousted (snatched away) from our land ..." (28:57)

The Qur'ân did of course point out that the apprehension was groundless, for it was Allah who had indeed given the Ka'ba its position and by means of it the position the Quraysh clans enjoyed. Thus the concluding part of the above-quoted *'âyah* states:

﴿ أولم نمكن لهم حرما ءامنا يجبىٰ إليه ثمرات كل شيء رزقا من لدنا ولـٰكن أكثرهم لا يعلمون ﴾

"...Have We not established for them a secure sanctuary (i.e. Ka'ba) to which are brought the fruits (profits) of all things, as provision from Us? But most of them do not understand."

It was clearly to allay such apprehension on the part of the Quraysh leaders that the Prophet is found to have sometimes specifically mentioned that if they accepted the truth they, instead of losing their position, would indeed become masters of all Arabia and of the destiny of the Persian and Roman empires.

Another equally important reason for their opposition lay in their way of life. For centuries the Arab tribes, particularly their leaders, had been accustomed to a life of unbridled freedom and license without any well-defined rules of responsibility except for certain vaguely understood and loosely followed tribal customs and values. Licentiousness, fornication, adultery, murder, robbery, deception and unconscionable bargains in busness, ill-treatment of the poor, the weak and orphan, burying alive of female children, and the like, were of common occurrence and the only redress against such offences lay in tribal vengeance. As against these the Messenger of Allah called the Arabs to a reformed life and a new system of society and social relationship based on a divinely communicated code of conduct and a Book of guidance. It enjoined individual responsibility for each major and minor act, prescriped punishments for them not only in this world but also before Allah on a final day of judgement when each individual would be raised after his death. It further emphasized that this worldly life was not the be-all and end-all of human existence, but that there is an eternal life after death when each individual's position in that life would be determined in the light of his acts in this world. The teachings of Islam thus meant a revo-

lutionary transformation of the prevailing society and social relationship which it was not easy for the clan leaders to accept. Its acceptance meant an abandonment of the centuries-old traditional life. Their opposition to Islam was thus at bottom a conflict between the spirit of unbridled freedom and license on the one hand and the principle of the rule of law and constitution providing freedom with responsibility on the other. It was for this reason as also for the reason mentioned in the previous pragraphs that the conservative clan leaders, though not quite unaware of the concept of Allah as the Supreme Lord, refused to abandon the idols and to accept the divinely ordained code. Their attitude is best illustrated by the fact that at a certain stage of their opposition they even agreed to accept the personal leadership of the Prophet, recognizing him as their ruler and king but not to accept Islam and the Book. For, acceptance of only the personal leadership of the Prophet did not involve the abandonment of the traditional way of life and the matter would end with the end of the latter's life. But acceptance of Islam, the code of conduct contained in a divinely revealed Book which will continue to exist and demand adherence to it, was quite a different matter. Not for nothing did the Quraysh leaders sometimes say : "...We will never believe in this Qur'an, nor in that which came before it."[1] Clearly, their objection was not simply to what the Prophet was giving out to them, but to any sort of a written code of conduct.

Closely related to the above mentioned cause was the leaders' fear of losing their position of leadership and supremacy in the society and their pride and arrogance born out of that position. The clan and tribe leaders looked upon themselves as the ones who issued commands and were followed and not as ones who followed others. Acceptance of Islam meant, however, the virtual reversal of that position and necessitated obedience to the Messenger of Allah as the divinely appointed leader in all affairs of life. The Quraysh leaders found it difficult to accept that altered position, especially in respect of a person who had been born and brought up among them, who had not yet crossed the age of youth and who, moreover, had not hitherto been a wealthy and influential individual in the society. The Quraysh leaders had of course once proposed to accept the Prophet as their leader, as mentioned above, but that was conditional upon his abandoning his mission and was only a

1. 34:31. See for instance Al-Qurṭubî, *Tafsîr,* XIV, p. 302. The text runs as follows:

﴿وقال الذين كفروا لن نؤمن بهـٰـذا القرءان ولا بالذى بين يديه . . .﴾

manoeuvre on their part to save themselves the revolutionary transformation of society which Islam aimed at. In fact, underlying their whole attitude was their pride of affluence, man-power and traditional social position that made them arrogant and prevented them from accepting the truth even though they seemed to realize it. The Qur'ân makes frequent references to this arrogance on their part. "Never did We send a warner to a habitation", says 34:34-35, "but that its leading ones said: "We disbelieve in what you have been sent with. And they said: "We have more in wealth and sons, and we shall not be punished."[1] "As to those who do not believe in the hereafter", says another passage,"their hearts refuse (to know the truth), and they are arrogant."[2] "Woe to every sinful falsehood-monger who hears the signs of Allah recited to him, then obstinately persists in arrogance, as if he had not heard them. So give him the good tidings of a painful punsihment."[3] "And when Our signs are recited to him, he turns away arrogantly."[4] "They (previously) swore their strongest oaths by Allah that if a warner came to them they would certainely be the more guided than any other people; but when a warner did come to them, it only increased them in estrangement, on account of their arrogance in the land and plotting of evil..."[5]

Another substantial reason with some of the leaders for their opposition was their spirit of clan rivalry. This was particularly so with 'Abû Jahl of Banû Makhzûm. There was a long-standing rivalry between Banu Hâshim (Banû 'Âbd Manâf) and Banû Makhzûm for leadership, centring mainly round the various rights and duties connected with the Ka'ba. The emergence of the Messenger of Allah from Banû Hâshim was viewed by 'Abû Jahl in the light of this rivalry and he made no secret of it. It is reported that once when he and two other leaders, 'Abû Sufyân and Sharîq ibn Akhnâs,

1. The Arabic text runs as follows:

﴿ وماۤ أرسلنا في قرية من نذير إلا قال مترفوها إنا بماۤ أرسلتم به كـٰفرون * وقالوا نحن أكثر أموٰلا وأولـٰدا وما نحن بمعذبين ﴾ (٣٤:٣٤-٣٥)

2. 16:22. The text runs as follows: ﴿ ... فالذين لا يؤمنون بالآخرة قلوبهم منكرة وهم مستكبرون ﴾ (١٦:٢٢)

3. 45:7-8. The text runs as follows:

﴿ ويل لكل أفاك أثيم * يسمع ءايـٰت الله تـتلىٰ عليه ثم يصرّ مستكبرا كأن لم يسمعها فبشره بعذاب أليم ﴾ (٤٥:٧-٨)

4. 31:7. The text runs as follows: ﴿ وإذا تتلىٰ عليه ءايـٰتنا ولّىٰ مستكبرا... ﴾ (٣١:٧)

5. 35:42-43. The text runs as follows:

﴿ وأقسموا بالله جهد أيمـٰنهم لـئن جاءهم نذير ليكونن أهدىٰ من إحدى الأمم فلما جاءهم نذير مّا زادهم إلا نفورا * استكبارا فى الأرض ومكر السيئ... ﴾ (٣٥:٤٢-٤٣)

See also Q. 34:31-33 and 40:47-48 cited above (*supra,* pp. 609-610), 40:56 and 6:123; 7:36; 39:59-60; 45:31 and 104:1-3.

had returned home after having stealthily listened to the Prophet's recitation of the Qur'ân at night, the last named person (i.e. Sharîq ibn Akhnâs) went to 'Abû Jahl and privately asked him about his opinion regarding what he had heard. He replied indignantly: "What have I heard? We have been competing with Banû 'Abd Manâf for honour and leadership. They fed people; we also fed people. They helped others with means of transport, we also did so. They gave in charity, we also gave in charity; so much so that we became shoulder to shoulder like two running horses in a race. They now say: 'We have a Prophet from among us, to whom revelations come from heaven!' Now, how could we have this? By God, we shall never believe in it, nor treat it as true."[1] A somewhat similar spirit of clan rivalry determined the attitude of the leaders of Banû 'Umayyah also.

Last but not least, tribal conservatism and attachment to tradition was onother important reason for the opposition. The leaders often raised the slogan for maintaining and continuing the religion of their forefathers and decried the implication that the latter were mistaken or unwise in their beliefs and practices and were as such suffering in the hell-fire. While this sentiment was general among the mass of the population, the leaders made use of it to incite them against the Messenger of Allah. The Qur'ân refers to this attitude of theirs in a number of passages. Some of them run as follows:

﴿وإذا تتلىٰ عليهم ءايـٰتنا بينـٰت قالوا ما هـٰذا إلا رجل يريد أن يصدكم عمّا كان يعبد ءاباؤكم...﴾ (٤٣:٣٤)

"When our clear signs are recited to them they say: ' This is naught but a man who intends to prevent you from worshipping what your fathers (ancestors) used to worship.'" (34:43)

﴿بل قالوا إنا وجدنآ ءابآءنا علىٰ أمة وإنا علىٰ ءاثـٰرهم مهتدون * وكذٰلك مآ أرسلنا من قبلك فى قرية من نذير إلا قال مترفوهآ إنا وجدنآ ءابآءنا علىٰ أمة و إنا علىٰ ءاثـٰرهم مقتدون﴾ (٤٣: ٢٢-٢٣)

"Nay', they said: 'we found our feathers following a certain religion and we do guide ourselves by their footsteps.' Similarly, whenever We sent a warner before you to any habitation, the affluent ones of it said: 'We found our fathers following a certain religion, and we will surely follow in their footsteps.'" (43:22-23)

﴿وإذا قيل لهم اتبعوا مآ أنزل الله قالوا بل نتبع ما وجدنا عليه ءابآءنا . . .﴾ (٣١: ٢١)

"And when it is said to them:' Follow what Allah has sent down', they say: 'Nay, we

1. Ibn Hishâm, 315-316. The same and other similar remarks by 'Abû Jahl on other occasions are also reported. See for instance Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr,* III, pp. 245-247 and Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr,* XI, pp. 332-333.

shall follow that on which we found our fathers'..." (31:21).[1]

For all these reasons the Makkan leaders ranged themselves against the Messenger of Allah and Islam. Their chief manoeuvres and methods are mentioned below.

III. THE IMMEDIATE ALLEGATIONS AND SARCASM

(a) The allegation of madness and of straying from the right course: One of the earliest manoeuvres of the opposition was an attempt to discredit the Prophet and to alienate the people from him by dubbing him as one who had gone off his head and had strayed from the right course of conduct. Various terms were employed for the purpose, such as *majnûn* (mad or one possessed by a *jinn* or evil spirit), *maftûn* (maniac or one who had gone off his head), *masḥûr* (betwitched or under the spell of sorcery), etc. These expressions were more or less coterminous; for madness, according to the prevailing Arab notion, was essentially the result of the influence of an evil spirit (a wicked *jinn*) or of the spell of sorcery. Closely related to this allegation was the allegation that the Prophet had strayed from the right and traditional course of conduct and had been misguided. "And they say:", points out the Qur'an, "O you on whom the recital has been sent down, you indeed are mad." (15:6) = ﴿وقالوا يـٰأيها الذى نزّل عليه الذكر إنك لمجنون﴾ (١٥ : ٦)

"Behold the transgressors say: "You follow none but a man bewitched." (17:47)= ﴿...إذ يقول الظـٰلمون إن تتبعون إلا رجلا مسحورا﴾ (١٧ : ٤٧)

"And the unbelievers almost smite you with their looks when they hear the recital (Qur'ân), and say: ' Verily he is mad." (68:51)=

﴿وإن يكاد الذين كفروا ليُزلِقُونك بأبصـٰرهم لَمَّا سمعوا الذِّكر ويقولون إنه لَمجنون﴾ (٦٨ : ٥١)

The combination of the unbelievers' stern look with their ascription of madness to the Prophet, as described in the last passage, indicates that their allegation in this instance was more an outcome of their astonishment and disapproval than of their conviction that he was really mad. In any case the Qur'ân refers to this allegation on the unbelievers' part at a number of places[2] by way of denying and refuting it as well as by way of reassuring the Messenger of Allah of the sublimity of his character and conduct. The allegations were so manifestly absurd and so evidently belied by the soundness of his mind and consistency of his words and deeds both before and after his

1. See also Q. 16:35 and 6:148.
2. See also Q. 26:27; 37:36 and 44:14.

call, as was clear to all those who knew him or came in contact with him, that no lengthy argument was needed to refute them. Hence the Qur'ân's denials are short and incisive. "Do they not reflect (a little)", says the Qur'ân, "that their companion is not afflicted with madness? He is but a clear warner". (70:184)= ﴿أولم يتفكروا ما بصاحبهم من جِنَّة إن هو إلا نذير مّبين﴾ (١٨٤:٧٠) "Or do they say: 'He is possessed'? Rather he has brought them the truth." (23:70) ﴿أم يقولون به جِنّة بل جآءهم بالحق ...﴾ ٢٣: ٧٠ [1]

Similarly, to the unbelievers' allegation that the Prophet had gone astray the Qur'an declares: "Your companion has not gone astray, nor is he misled." (53:2)= ﴿ما ضلّ صاحبكم وما غوىٰ﴾ "Verily it is your Lord Who knows best who has strayed from His path, and it is He Who knows best those who are on the path of guidance." (68:7 & 16:125)= ﴿إن ربك هو أعلم بمن ضل عن سبيله وهو أعلم بالمهتدين﴾ [2] "Say, if I have gone astray, then I stray only to the detriment of my own self; but if I have received guidance, then it is because of what my Lord communicates to me ..." (34:50)= ﴿قل إن ضللت فإنما أضل على نفسي وإن اهتديت فبما يوحي إليَّ ربّي ...﴾ The Qur'ân also points out more than once that such allegations of madness and insanity were hurled at the previous Prophets too. "Thus did no Messenger come to those before them but that they said: 'He is a sorcerer or one possessed (51:52)= ﴿كذٰلك مآ أتى الذين من قبلهم من رسول إلا قالوا ساحر أو مجنون﴾ [3] (٥٢:٥١)

(b) The allegation of being a sorcerer, a poet and a soothsayer: It would be seen from the last mentioned passage that the Prophet was called also a sorcerer. The shift from the allegation of his being under the spell of sorcery (*masḥûr*) to his being himself a sorcerer (*sâḥir*) was doubtless due to the persuasive quality and bewitching linguistic beauty of the texts of revelation he had been giving out. For, while the appellation of *sâḥir* (sorcerer) was being applied to him, the only unusual performance of his which could justify the description was the giving out of the texts of the revelation. And it was these that were often characterized by his opponents as *siḥr* (magic or sorcery). The Qur'ân's reference to this allegation of the unbelievers is equally clear. "Is it a matter of wonderment to men", it says, "that we have sent Our revelation to a man from among themselves?....(But) the unbelievers say: 'This

1. Similar in terms are Q. 23:25; 34:8; 34:46; 52:29; 68;2 and 81:22.
2. Almost similar in wording is Q. 6:117.
3. See also Q. 23:25; 26:27; 51:39.

(man) is indeed an evident sorcerer.'" (10:2)=

﴿أكان للناس عجبا أن أوحينآ إلىٰ رجل منهم .... قال الكـٰفرون إن هذا لسـٰحر مبين﴾

"And they wonder that a warner has come to them from amongst themselves. And the unbelievers say, this is a sorcerer, telling lies!" (38:4)=

﴿وعجبوا أن جآءهم منذر منهم و قال الكـٰفرون هـٰذا سـٰحر كذاب﴾ (٣٨: ٤)

"So when the truth came to them from Us they said: 'This indeed is evident sorcery." (10:76)= ﴿فلما جآءهم الحق من عندنا قالوا إن هـٰذا لسحر مبين﴾.

"And when the truth came to them, they said: 'This is sorcery and we reject it." (43:30)= ﴿ولما جآءهم الحق قالوا هـٰذا سحر وإنا به كـٰفرون﴾ [1]

The reference to the allegation of the Prophet's being a poet is no less emphatic. "And they say: 'Are we to give up our gods for the sake of a poet , one possessed?" (37:36)= ﴿ويقولون أئِـنا لتاركوا ءالهتنا لشاعر مجنون﴾ (٣٧: ٣٦)

"We have not taught him versifying, nor is it appropriate for him. This (revelation) is but a recital, a Qur'ân, evident and clear!" (36:69)=

﴿وما علّمنـٰـه الشعر وما ينبغى له, إن هو إلا ذكر و قرءان مبين﴾

"Therefore proclaim (Allah's praises); for you are not by your Lord's grace a soothsayer, nor one possessed. Or do they say, 'A poet! We await a calamity for him in the course of time.' Say: 'You wait; I too, along with you, am of those awaiting." (52:29-31)

﴿فذكر فمآ أنت بنعمة ربك بكاهن ولا مجنون * أم يقولون شاعر نتربّص به رَيبَ المنون * قل تربّصوا فإنى معكم من المتربّصين﴾ (٥٢: ٢٩-٣١)

The Qur'an very categorically declares: "And it is *not* the saying of a poet; little do you believe; nor the saying of a soothsayer; little do you take admonition. (It is) something sent down from the Lord of all the worlds." (69:41-43)=

﴿وما هو بقول شاعر قليلا مّا تؤمنون * ولا بقول كاهن قليلا مّا تذكرون * تنزيل من ربّ العـٰلمين﴾ (٦٩: ٤١-٤٣)

The Qur'ân also points out the characteristics of a poet in contrardistinction to those of a Prophet.[2]

(c) *Ridicule and sarcasm:* Another method adopted by the Prophet's opponents was taunting him and the Muslims, holding them up to public

1. See also Q. 10:76; 11:17; 21:5; 27:13; 34:43; 37:15; 46:7; 54:2; 61:6 and 74:24.
2. Q. 26:224-226.

ridicule and scoffing at the various teachings of Islam, particularly the idea of resurrection, judgement and life after death. The sources specifically mention the following persons as the principal ridiculers of the Prophet and the Muslims.[1]

1. Al-Walid ibn al-Mughîrah (of Banû Makhzûm)
2. Al-Aswad ibn al-Muṭṭalib 'Abû Zam'ah (of Banû Asad)
3. Al-Aswad ibn 'Abd Yaghûth ibn Wahb (of Banû Zuhrah)

(This man was the Prophet's maternal cousin)

4. Al-Ḥârith ibn Qays (also called Ibn al-'Anṭalah or 'Aiṭalah, of Banû Sahm)
5. Al-'Âṣ ibn al-Wâ'il (of Banû sahm)

Besides these persons 'Abû Lahab, Al-Ḥakam ibn Abî al-'Âṣ and Mâlik ibn al-Ṭalâṭilah ibn Ghabshân also are mentioned as prominent ridiculers.[2]

Initially, the Prophet's modest position in the society was made a point of attack and mockery by the unbelievers."When they see you", states the Qur'ân, "they treat you but in mockery (saying): ' Is this the one whom Allah has sent as a Messenger? He would indeed have misled us from our gods, had we not patiently adhered to them..."[3] The unenvinable position of some of the converts who usually remained in attendance on the Prophet was similarly scoffed at. "Those in sin used to laugh at those who believed. And whenever they passed by them, used to wink at each other (in mockery). And when they returned to their own people, they would return jesting. And whenever they saw them, they would say, 'Verily these people have gone astray'."[4]

The most common item of their ridicule was the idea of resurrection and final judgement. "And those who disbelieve say (in ridicule): 'Shall we show you the man who imforms you that when you were completely disintegrated

1. See for instance Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr,* XIV, pp. 69-70, 71-72.

2. See *Subul al-Hudâ,* II, Cairo, 1394 H.,p. 608 and Al-Balâdhurî, *'Ansâb al-'Ashrâf,* I.,p. 154.

3. Q. 25:41-42. =

﴿ وإذا رأوك إن يتخذونك إلا هُزُوًا أهذا الذي بعث اللهُ رسولا * إن كاد ليُضلّنا عن ءالهتنا لولآ أن صبَرنَا عليها . . . ﴾

4. Q. 83:29-32 =

﴿ إن الذين أجرموا كانوا من الذين ءامنوا يضحكون * وإذا مَرُّوا بهم يتغامزون * وإذا انقلبوا إلىٰ أهلهم انقلبوا فكهين * وإذا رأوهم قالوٓا إنَّ هـٰؤلآء لضآلّون ﴾

into pieces you will be created anew. He has indeed fabricated a lie against God, or is he under the spell of a spirit?..."[1]

"And they used to say: 'What! When we died and became dust and bones, would we really be raised up again? And our forfathers of old?"[2] It is reported that 'Umayyah ibn Khalaf or Al-'Âṣ ibn Wâ'il one day came to the Prophet with a piece of rotten bone, pressed it into dust between the hands and after blowing it towards the Prophet asked him whether he wanted to say that God would revive that bone and its original possessor into life. The Prophet replied in the affirmative. With reference to this incident 36:77-79 was revealed. It says:

﴿أولَم يَرَ الإنسـٰن أنا خلقنـٰه من نطفة فإذا هو خصيم مبين * وضرب لنا مثلا و نسِيَ خلقه قال من يُحيِ العظـٰم وهى رميم * قل يحييها الذى أنشأهآ أول مرة و هو بكل خلق عليم﴾ (٣٦:٧٧-٧٩)

"Does not man see that it is We Who created him from a drop? Yet lo! he is an open disputant. And he strikes an instance for Us, and he forgets his (own) creation. He says: 'Who can bring the bone into life when it is decomposed?' Say: 'He Who created it for the first time will bring it into life (again); and He is the Omniscient of all the processes of creation."[3]

A good deal of the Qur'ân is indeed devoted to bringing home the theme of resurrection and judgement.

Another person, Al-Ḥârith ibn Qays (no.4 above) used to remark that Muḥammad (ﷺ) had indeed deceived himself and his companions by promising them that they would be raised up after their death. The fact is that, he used to stress, that all men are destroyed only by the passage of time.[4] A more heinous joke was cut by Al-'Aṣ ibn Wâ'il. He had some swords made by Kahbbâb ibn al-Aratt, who was a swords-smith by profession and who was one of the earliest converts to Islam. Al-'Âṣ did not pay him the price of the swords and when he asked for it, told him tauntingly that when both of them were resurrected after death, he (Al-'Âṣ) would pay it, adding that as he was in a far better material position in this world he would naturally be in the same position in the hereafter.[5] The two Aswads

1. Q. 34:7-8 =
﴿وقال الذين كفروا هل ندلكم على رجل ينبئكم إذا مزقتم كل ممزق إنكم لفى خلق جديد * أفترىٰ على الله كذبا أم به جنة ...﴾
2. Q. 56:47 = ﴿وكانوا يقولون أيـذا متنا وكنا ترابا وعظمـا أءنا لمبعوثون * أوَ ءاباۤؤنا الأولون﴾
3. See for instance Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr,* pt. XXIII, pp. 30-31.
4. *Subul al-Hudâ, op.cit,* III, 696.
5. *Bukhârî, Kitâb al-Tafsîr,* no. 4732, and *Kitâb al-Ijârah,* no. 2275.

(nos. 2&3) used to tell their companions, when passing by the Muslims who were of small means, that they were then seeing the people who would be successors to the Roman and Persian empires and their treasures![1]

Such scoffing and ridiculing on the unbelievers' part, particularly their imputation of lying on the Prophet's part pained him very much. There are a number of passages in the Qur'ân wherein Allah comforts and consoles him and advises him to persevere and have patience. "And have patience over what they say and avoid them in a dignified manner. And leave Me (to deal with) and the deniers (of the truth) possessing fortunes; and bear with them for a while." (73:10-11)= ﴿واصبرعلى ما يقولون واهجرهم هجرا جميلا ۞ وذرني والمكذبين أولى النّعمَة وَمهّلهُم قليلا﴾

"Verily we suffice you against the deriders." (15:95)= ﴿إنا كفينَـٰك المستهزءين﴾ "We know indeed that what they say grieves you. They do not (really) belie you (as a person), but the transgressors in fact reject the signs of Allah (i.e. the revelation)." (6:33)= ﴿ قد نعلم إنه ليحزنك الذى يقولون فإنهم لا يكذّبونك ولكن الظّـٰلمين بـٔـايـٰـت الله يجحدون﴾

The Prophet is further told: "And the messengers before you too had been (similarly) dubbed as liars but they bore with patience the imputation of lying and were wronged till Our aid (and victory) came to them. Nothing can alter Allah's words (dispensation). There have already come to you some of the accounts of the (previous) messengers." (6:34)= ﴿ولقد كُذّبت رسل من قبلك فصبروا على ما كُذّبوا وأُوذُوا حتىٰ ءاتـٰـهم نصرنا ولا مبدّل لكلمـٰت الله ولقد جآءك من نبإئ المرسلين﴾ (٦:٣٤)

Nothing could be a clearer promise by Allah for the Prophet's ultimate success. Earlier in the same *sûrah* the Prophet is told: "And there indeed had been mocked Messengers before you; but those who mocked were hemmed in by the very thing they had mocked at." (6:10)= ﴿ولقد استهزئ برسل من قبلك فحاق بالذين سخروا منهم ما كانوا به يستهزءون﴾ (٦:١٠) "Therefore let not their utterances grieve you. Surely We know what they conceal and what they disclose." (36:76)= ﴿فلا يحزنك قولهم إنا نعلم ما يسرّون وما يعلنون﴾[2]

1. Al-Balâdhurî, *Ansâb al-Ashrâf,* I, pp. 131-132; *Subul al-Hudâ, op.cit,* II, pp. 608.
2. See also Q. 10:65; 16:127; 27:70.

CHAPTER XXVI

ORGANIZED OPPOSITION: I. OBJECTIONS, ARGUMENTATION AND DEMAND FOR MIRACLES

The unbelieving Makkan leaders organized themselves for opposing the Prophet in a more serious way as soon as he began to preach the truth openly at public gatherings and assemblages. The Quraysh leaders realized that mere ridiculing him or calling him mad, a poet or a sorcerer would not do. Hence they thought of more serious objections and argumentation.

I. OBJECTION AND ARGUMENTATION

The most frequent objections centred round the question, how could a human being be appointed Allah's messenger? If Allah intented to send a messenger, why should an angel not have been despatched as such? Or, at least, why an angel should not have been attached as an assistant to or as a co-messenger with a human messenger? Then, if a man was after all to be Allah's messenger, why should Muḥammad (ﷺ) who had hitherto not been a prominent leader in the society and who lived a life of an ordinary individual with wife and children, conducting business, walking in the streets and markets, and eating and drinking like any other man — why should such an ordinary individual have been chosen as Allah's messenger? Why, instead, was not a prominent leader of either Makka or Ṭâif sent as Allah's messenger?

The unbelieving leaders asked these questions not for arriving at the truth but as points of propaganda to dissuade the common man from following the Prophet. The Qur'an is replete with references to such objections of the Makkan leaders. Some of the relevant passages run as follows:

(1) ﴿وقالوا مال هـٰذا الرسول يأكل الطعام ويمشى فى الأسواق لولآ أنزل إليه ملك فيكون معه, نذيرا * أو يُلقىٰ إليه كنز أو تكون له جنة يأكل منها وقال الظـٰـلمون إن تتبعون إلا رجلا مسحورا﴾ (٢٥:٧-٨)

"And they said: 'What sort of a messenger is this, who eats food and walks in the market? Why has not an angel been sent down to him to become a warner along with him? Or, why has not a treasure been bestowed upon him, or a garden given to him, wherefrom he derives his provision?' And the transgressors said: 'You follow none but a man bewitched.'" (25:7-8)

(2) ﴿وقال الملأ من قومه الذين كفروا وكذبوا بلقآء الأخرة وأترفنـٰـهم فى الحيوٰة الدنيا ما هـٰـذا إلا بشر مثلكم يأكل مما تأكلون منه ويشرب مما تشربون * ولئن أطعتم بشرا مثلكم إنكم إذا لخـٰـسرون﴾ (٢٣:٣٣-٣٤)

"And the chiefs of his people who disbelieved and denied the meeting in the hereafter (i.e. Day of Judgement) and on whom We bestowed the good things of this life said: 'He is no more than a man like yourselves ; he eats of what you eat and drinks of what you drink. If you obeyed a man like yourselves you would be sure losers." (23:33-34)

(3) ﴿...وأسرّوا النّجوى الذين ظلموا هل هـٰذا إلا بشر مّثلكم أفتأتون السّحر و أنتم تبصرون﴾ (٢١ :٣)

"...And they concealed their private consels — those who transgressed (saying): 'Is this exept a man like yourselves? Will you get into the sorcery while you see it?" (21:3)

(4) ﴿أءنزل عليه الذّكر من بيننا...﴾ (٣٨ :٨)

"Has the recital (revelation) been sent down on him, of all of us?" (38:8)

(5) ﴿وقالوا لولا نزّل هـٰذا القرءان على رجل من القريتين عظيم﴾ (٤٣ :٣١)

"And they said: "Why is not this Qur'ân sent down to a leading man in either of the two towns (i.e. Makka and Ṭâ'if) ?" (43:31)

(6) ﴿وقال الذين كفروا للذين ءامنوا لو كان خيرا ما سبقونآ إليه...﴾

"And those who disbelieved said of those who believed: "Were it (the revelation) a good thing they would not have preceded us in accepting it..." (46:11)

The Qur'ân's (and therefore the Prophet's) replies to these objections were brief and to the point. Thus, with reference to the question of whether a human being could be Allah's messenger it was said that this was no novelty with Muḥammad (ﷺ); all the previous Prophets and Messengers were human beings, eating and drinking and conducting family life as well as engaging themselves in the affairs of the world. None of them was an immortal being. Also, each Prophet was raised from among the same people amidst whom he preached. In no case was he a stranger coming from an unknown place. Regarding the question why an angel was not sent as Allah's messenger it was pointed out that if the world was inhabited by angels, living and moving about there like human beings, an angel would have been sent as a messenger. Moreover, if an angel messenger was to be sent to human beings, he would in that case have been sent in the shape and form of human being, and that would have caused no less confusion. As regards the objection why a leading man of either Makka or Ṭâ'if was not sent as Allah's messenger, it was pointed out that in saying so the unbelieving leaders did not mean that in that case they would have believed. Rather, their objection on this count was only an expression of their scepticism about Allah's revelation. Moreover, prophethood and revelation are Allah's special favours; He

knows best on whom to bestow them. The unbelieving leaders were neither the owners of those favours, nor could they arrogate to themselves the right to apportion them according to their likes and dislikes. Some of the Qur'ânic passages containing these replies are as follows:

(1) ﴿قل ما كنت بدعا من الرسل...﴾ (٤٦:٩)

"Say: 'I am no novelty in being of the messengers..." (46:9)

(2) ﴿ومآ أرسلنا قبلك إلا رجالا نّوحِىٓ إليهم فسئلوٓا أهل الذكر إن كنتم لا تعلمون * وما جعلنـٰهم جسدا لا يأكلون الطعام وما كانوا خـٰلدين﴾ (٢١:٧-٨)

"We did not commission as messengers before you anyone exept men, sending revelation to them. Ask the people of the scripture if you do not know this. Nor did We make them of bodies that ate no food; nor were they exempt from death." (21:7-8) [1]

(3) ﴿و مآ أرسلنا من قبلك إلا رجالا نّوحِىٓ إليهم من أهل القرىٓ...﴾ (١٢:١٠٩)

"Nor did We despatch messengers before you, sending revelation on them, except men from among the people of the same habitations..." (12:109)

(4) ﴿وما منع الناس أن يؤمنوٓا إذ جآءهم الهدىٰ إلآ أن قالوٓا أبعث الله بشرا رّسولا * قل لّو كان فى الأرض ملـٰٓئكة يمشون مطمئنين لنزّلنا عليهم من السمآء ملكا رّسولا﴾ (١٧:٩٤-٩٥)

"It did not prevent men from believing when the guidance came to them except that they said (wondered): 'Has Allah sent a man as messenger?' Say: 'If there were angels on the earth moving about contentedly there, We would surely have sent down from the heavens an angel as a messenger." (17:94-95)

(5) ﴿ولو جعلنـٰه ملكا لّجعلنـٰه رجلا ولَلَبسنَا عليهم مّا يلبسون﴾

"And if We made an angel a messenger (unto human beings) , We would have shaped him as a man and thereby would have surely confused them about which they are in confusion." (6:9)

(4) ﴿أهم يقسمون رحمت ربّك نحن قسمنا بينهم معيشتهم فى الحيَوٰة الدنيا ورفعنا بعضهم فوق بعض درجـٰت لّيتخذ بعضهم بعضا سخريا و رحمت ربك خير مما يجمعون﴾

"Is it they who distribute the mercy of your Lord? It is We Who have apportioned among them their livelihood in the life of this world and have raised some of them above others in ranks, that some may take others in service; but the mercy of your lord (i.e. the special mercy of Prophethood and revelation) is better than what they amass." (43:32)

This last *'âyah* is in reply to the unbelievers' obejection, mentioned in the *'âyah* preceding it (43:31), as to why a leading man of Makka or Ṭâ'if was not commissioned as Allah's massenger.

1. See also Q. 13:38.

The unbelievers raised objections also against the nature of Qur'ân, denying its revelation by Allah. Thus, besides calling the Prophet a poet, a *kâhin* (soothsayer) and *sâḥir* (magician) they accused him of his having himself fabricated or composed the texts and also alleged that he was taught or instructed by another person or persons, that someone else had dictated the texts to him or written them for him which he committed to memory and gave out as revelations. These aspects of their objections have already been dealt with.[1]

It may be observed that the various objections and allegations of the unbelievers were not only untrue and untenable but also inconsistent and contradictory. Thus, if the Prophet had been mad or insane, as alleged, he could not have been a poet or a soothsayer; if he was a poet, he could not have been a soothsayer or a sorcerer, for the utterances of the latter were very much different from the nature of compositions a poet was wont to make. Again, if the Prophet himself had facbricated or composed the texts of the Qur'ân, it would be illogical to say that someone else had dictated the texts to him or had written them for him; and if someone had done that for him, it would have been impossible for him to claim Allah's messengership and reciept of revelation from Him without running the risk of being exposed and contradicted by those alleged helpers. In fact, with reference to such inconsistencies of the unbelievers the Qur'ân very pithily points out to the Prophet: "Look! How they strike similitudes for you! Thus they go astray and cannot find a way." (17:48)=

﴿انظر كيف ضربوا لك الأمثال فضلوا فلا يستطيعون سبيلا﴾

"Rather they denied the truth when it came to them. Hence they were in a confused state." (50:5)= ﴿بل كذبوا بالحق لما جآءهم فهم فى أمر مريج﴾

The various objections of the unbelievers and the Qur'ânic replies to them also illustrate the fact that the revelations were given out to the people as soon as they came to the Prophet. Indeed, it would have been meaningless to withhold the revelations from the public for any length of time, for a good deal of them were revealed on the occasion of or in relation to the unbelievers' objections.

The Quraysh leaders did not stop by making only the above-mentioned objections. They also put a number of questions to the Prophet and sought

1. *Supra*, pp. 265-274, 621-622.

the opinions of those who were better informed than they to ascertain the genuineness of his claim. It is reported that the Quraysh leaders sent two of their men, Al-Naḍr ibn Al-Ḥârith and 'Uqbah ibn Abî Mu'ayṭ, to the Jewish rabbis at Madina to ask their opinion about the Prophet.[1] The two men went there, gave the rabbis a description of the Prophet and his activities and asked their opinion about him. In reply they suggested to the Quraysh delegates that they test the Prophet by asking him about three things, namely, about "the group of young men with a strange story" (i.e. *'Aṣḥâb al-Kahf*, people of the cave), "the world traveller" (i.e. *Dhû al-Qarnayn*) and about *al-Rûḥ* (spirit, soul), adding that if he gave correct replies to these questions, he was a genuine Prophet; if not, he was an imposter. The two men returned to Makka and informed the leaders about the rabbis' suggestions. Accordingly the Quraysh leaders went to the Prophet and asked him about the three subjects. He promised to give them a reply on the following day, without adding "If Allah wishes" (*in shâ' Allah*). It so happened that no *waḥy* came to him for a couple of weeks. This made him very sad while the Quraysh leaders did not fail to exploit the situation and starting taunting the Prophet for having failed to give them a reply as he had promised. At the end of some two weeks, however, *sûrat al-Kahf* (No18) was revealed to him. It contained a description and the replies on the subjects. The 23rd and 24th *'âyahs* of the *sûrah* contained also a mild rebuke for the Prophet for his having forgotten to add *in shâ 'Allah* when he promised a reply to the Quraysh leaders.[2] The replies given to the questions did not of course satisfy the latter who continued their opposition as before.

II. DEMAND FOR MIRACLES AND UNUSUAL FEATS

Closely related to their argumentation was the unbelievers' demand for the performance of miracles and other unusual feats by the Prophet.[3] As in the case of their objections, this demand for miracles also was made not with a view to seeking the truth but with the hostile intention of ridiculing and discomfiting the Prophet. They asked the Prophet from time to time to per-

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 300-308. See also Al-Qurṭubî, *Tafsîr*, X, 346 ff.
2. See Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr*, pt.XV, p. 228; Al-Qurṭubî, *Tafsîr*, X, pp. 384-385.
3. See for instance Q. 6:37; 6:124; 13:7 and 29:50

form various types of miracles, as was done by some of the previous Prophets. Ibn Isḥâq gives the repport of Ibn 'Abbâs about one occasion which says that on one evening, after sun-set, the Quraysh leaders, 'Utbah and Shaybah, sons of Rabî'ah, Abû Sufyân ibn Ḥarb, Al-Naḍr ibn al-Ḥârith, 'Abû al-Bakhtarî ibn Hishâm, Al-Aswad ibn al-Muṭṭalib ibn Asad, Zam'ah ibn al-Aswad, Al-Walîd ibn al-Mughîrah, 'Abû Jahl, 'Abd Allâh ibn 'Abî 'Umayyah, Al-'Âṣ ibn Wâ'il, Nubayh and Munabbih, sons of Al-Ḥajjâj, Umayyah ibn Khalaf and others assembled in the Ka'ba compound and sent for the Prophet in order to talk to him and to settle the affair with him. The Prophet, thinking that the leaders might have been inclined to listening to the message of Islâm, instantly presented himself before them. As he came to them they addressed him first by accusing him of his having abused their religion, gods and forefathers, caused dissension in the society and set at naught their aims and ambitions. They then told him that if in doing so his intention was to gain honour and position in the society and to amass wealth, they were ready to offer him as much wealth as would make him the wealthiest man in Makka, to accept him as their leader and even to make him their king, if only he abandoned his mission. Or, if he was suffering from any mental ailment, they would make all efforts and would expend their wealth in procuring a suitable treatment for him. To these proposals the Prophet calmly replied that it was none of his intention to attain wealth and position, nor was he suffering from any aliment. He was but a Messenger of Allah, with a book revealed to him, to warn them against Allah's retribution if they persisted in their wrong path and to give them the good tidings of His rewards and favours if they adopted a reformed life, adding that it would be their good fortune if they accepted Allah's message and his advice; if not, he would wait patiently till Allah decided between him and them.[1]

Thereupon the Quraysh leaders told him that if he did not accept their proposals he should at least do a favour to them. They said that there was no country like theirs wherein life was harder, with no plain land and no water. If he was truly Allah's messenger, he should ask his Lord to remove the bare hills and mountains from the land, transform it into plain fields, causing rivers and springs to gush forth therein, as in Syria and Iraq. He should also ask his Lord to resurrect their dead ancestors, particularly their great Shaykh

1. Ibn Hishâm, 295-298/ Ibn Isḥâq, *Al-Siyar wa al-Maghâzî,* 197-199 Ibn Kathîr, *Al-Bidâyah wa al-Nihâyah,* I, 49-51. *Tafsîr,* V, 115-117.

Quṣayy ibn Kilâb, so that they could testify in the Prophet's favour and thus they be convinced of his position as truly Allah's messenger. At this the Prophet said that he was not commissioned by Allah to perform those deeds, but only to deliver His message to them. He repeated that it would be their good fortune if they accepted the message; if not, he would patiently wait till Allah decided between him and them.[1]

The Quraysh leaders next told the Prophet that if he was not willing to do them the favour they asked for, he should at least ask his Lord to better his own position and to relieve him of the need for earning his own livelihood by going about in the markets like any other individual. He should ask Allah to provide him with fruit orchards, palaces and treasures of gold and silver, commensurate with his position as Allah's Messenger. The Prophet replied that he would never ask Allah for all those things, nor was he sent for that purpose. He was simply a warner and giver of good tidings. If they accepted the message, he reiterated, it would be their good fortune; if not, he would wait patiently till Allah decided between him and them.[2]

Persisting in their obstinacy the Quraysh leaders next told the Prophet that they would never believe in him unless he caused the sky to fall in pieces upon them, as he claimed Allah could do by way of retribution. To this statement the Prophet replied that that was up to Allah, if he willed so to deal with them, He could do it to them. Thereupon the Quraysh leaders tauntingly questioned him: Did his Lord not know that they would be sitting with him and asking him all that they had asked, and informed him in advance what he should tell them and what he would do to them if they did not accept what he had brought to them? They added that they had indeed come to know that a man of Al-Yamâmah named Al-Raḥmân prompted him (the Prophet) and told him that they would never believe in Al-Raḥmân. "We have thus rebutted all your pretensions, O Muḥammad", they told him in fine, "and we shall never let you alone with what you have done to us, until you destroy us, or we destroy you."[3]

As the Prophet then stood up to leave them, 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abî 'Umayyah ibn al-Mughîrah, who was a cousin of the Prophet's, being a son of 'Atîkah bint 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, stood up with him and addressed him thus:" O Muḥammad, your people made certain proposals to you but you did not accept them. Next they asked you to perform some deeds whereby they could be sure of your position in relation to Allah, as you claim, and believe

1. *Ibid.* 2. *Ibid.* 3. *Ibid.*

you and follow you. You did not do that. Then they asked you to obtain for yourself something whereby they could know your distinction and primacy over them and your position with Allah. You did not do it. They then asked you to hasten upon them some of the retributions wherewith you threaten them; but you did not do even that. By Allah, I will never believe in you unless you take a ladder and climb into the sky, while I look on, and then return with a complete book along with four angels who would testify that you are what you say you are. Even then I think I should not believe you." With this remark 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abi 'Umayyah left him and the Prophet returned to his family with a dejected mind for the leaders' refusal to accept the truth and their estrangement from him.[1]

The Qur'ân refers to such demands of the unbelievers in a number of passages, particularly in 17:90-93 which runs as follows:

﴿وقالوا لن نؤمن لك حتىٰ تفجُر لنا من الأرض ينبوعا * أو تكون لك جنّة من نخيل وعنب فتُفجّر الأنهـٰـر خلـٰـلها تفجيرا * أو تسقط السمآء كما زعمت علينا كسفا أو تأتي بالله والملـٰـٓـئكة قبيلا * أو يكون لك بيت من زخرف أو ترقىٰ فى السمآء ولن نؤمن لرقيك حتىٰ تنزل علينا كتـٰـبا نقرؤه قل سبحان ربى هل كنت إلا بشرا رسولا﴾ (١٧: ٩٠-٩٣)

"And they said: 'We shall never believe you until you cause a spring to gush forth for us from the earth or there comes into existence for you a garden of date-palms and grape vines wherein you cause rivers to burst forth and flow in streams; or you cause the sky to fall in pieces upon us (as punishment) as you assert; or bring Allah and the angels face to face with us; or there comes into existence for you an ornamented house of gold, or you go up into the sky, and (even then) we shall not believe in your going up till you bring down on us a (solid) book we can read (from).' Say: ' Glory to my Lord. Am I aught but a human being, a messenger?"

The passage is graphic enough to enable us to understand the nature of the unbelievers' demands even without reference to the report mentioned above. More remarkable is the reply given to their demands. It emphasizes that the Prophet was no more than a human being, only commissioned with divine message but claiming no divine attribute nor any supernatural power. It also underscores the peculiar nature of the unbelievers' notion of a Prophet or Messenger of Allah.

The above quoted passage also shows that the unbelievers even demanded that Allah Himself should appear before them to testify to the truth of the Prophet's claim. This demand was similar to what some of

1. *Ibid.*

Prophet Mûsâ's community said: "...We shall never believe you until we see Allah manifestly." (2:55)= ﴿...لن نؤمن لك حتى نرى الله جهرة...﴾ (٢:٥٥) The reply to this sort of demand is contained in 6:103 and 42:51 wherein it is clearly stated that it is not for human beings in this life to see Allah, nor to hear him speak face to face.

Reference has already bene made to the unbelievers' demand for angels being sent as messengers.[1] It appears from ibn 'Abbâs's report and from Q. 17:90-93 that they demanded the presentation of angels also as witnesses for the Prophet and revelation. That the unbelievers also asked for bringing their dead ancestors back into life so that they could testify to the truth of resurrection and life after death is specifically mentioned in 44:34-36 as follows:

﴿إن هٰـؤلاء ليقولون * إن هى إلا موتتنا الأولىٰ وما نحن بمنشرين * فأتوا بـٔـابآئِـنآ إن كنتم صادقين﴾ (٤٤: ٣٤-٣٦)

"Indeed these people say: 'There is naught but our first death and we shall not be raised again. So bring our fathers (back) if you are truthful."

To such demands for proofs or "signs" (*'âyât*) the Qur'ân, and therefore the Prophet, gave appropriate and correct replies. Indeed most of the Makkan part of the Qur'ân and also a considerable portion of the Madinan part deal with the unbelievers' denial of *risâlah* (messengership), *waḥy* (revelation) and *ba'th* (ressurection and life after death) on the one hand, and their demands for "signs" or proofs (*'âyât*) in support of those facts, on the other. If we analyze the Qur'anic replies to these demands the following facts emerge:

First, it is stated very clearly that the power and competence to perform "miracles" belong solely to Allah. if any previous Prophet did come forward with a miracle, he did it specifically by Allah's leave and enabling him to do so. The Prophet's themselves were no more than human beings, possessing no supernatural power. '...And it was never possible for any Messenger to bring a 'sign' except by Allah's leave and enabling ..." (40:78; 13:38)=

﴿... وما كان لرسول أن يأتى بـٔـاية إلا بإذن الله...﴾

"Say: 'Verily 'signs' rest with Allah; I am only a clear warner" (29:50)=
﴿... قل إنما الأيـٰـت عند الله وإنمآ أنا نذير مبين﴾

"Say Allah has certainly the power to send down a 'sign'; but most of them do not know." (6:37)= ﴿... قل إن الله قادر علىٰ أن ينزّل ءاية ولـٰـكنّ أكثرهم لا يعلمون﴾

1. *Supra*, pp. 627-629.

The instances of "miracles" on the part of some previous Prophet's, as given in the Qur'ân, further illustrate this fact. Thus Prophet 'Îsâ (Jesus), peace be on him, performed the "miracles" of bringing a clay figure of bird into life, healing the blind and the lepers, etc., "by Allah's leave" (بإذن الله).[1] The case of Mûsâ, peace be on him, is more instructive. He throws his stick by Allah's command; but as it turns into a moving snake he is frightened and holds back. Therefore Allah again commands him: "Seize it and be not afraid; We shall make it return to its former state."[2] When, therefore, Muḥammad (ﷺ) stated in reply to the Makkans' demand for specific "miracles" that he was no more than a man, a mere Messenger, he in fact only emphasized the true nature and source of miracles. He did *not refuse* to perform any miracle. There was no question of his refusing; for it was *not* within his own power and competence to perform any.

Secondly, the unbelievers demanded the performance of the unusual acts, as specified by them, not out of their sincere desire to ascertain the truth but out of obstinate disbelief and evil motive of discomfiting the Prophet. Hence, even if their demands had been acceded to, they would have rejected the performances as "sorcery" or on such other pretexts. Their attitude is very correctly portrayed by the Qur'ân as follows: "Even if We had sent down on you a book written on parchment so that they could touch it with their hands, the unbelievers would have cerainly said: 'This is nothing but obvious magic." (6:7)=

﴿ولو نزّلنا عليك كتـبا فى قرطاس فلمسوه بأيديهم لقال الذين كفروا إن هـذآ إلا سحر مبين﴾

"And even if We opened out to them a gate from the sky and they were to continue ascending therein, they would surely have said: 'Verily our eyes have been intoxicated; nay, we have been bewitched by sorcery." (15:14-15)=

﴿ولو فتحنا عليهم بابا من السمآء فظلوا فيه يعرجون * لقالوآ إنما سكّرت أبصـرنا بل نحن قوم مسحورون﴾ (١٥:١٤-١٥)

"And if their spurning is hard on you so that you would, if you could, seek a tunnel into the earth or a ladder into the sky and thus bring them a "sign" (it would be of no avail). If Allah so willed, He could get them together on guidance. So be not of those who are ignorant!" (6:35)=

1. Q. 3:49.
2. Q. 20:19-21.

﴿ وإن كان كبر عليك إعراضهم فإن استطعت أن تبتغى نفقا فى الأرض أو سلّما فى السمآء فتأتيهم بـٔاية ولو شآء الله لجمعهم على الهدىٰ فلا تكوننّ من الجـٰهلين ﴾ (٦ :٣٥)

"And they swore their strongest oaths by Allah that if a sign came to them they would certainly believe by it. Say: 'Signs are with Allah'. And what should make you realized that even if it came, they would not believe?... And even if We did send angels unto them, and the dead spoke to them and brought together before them all things face to face, they would not be the ones to believe, unless Allah willed so; but most of them are ignorant." (6:109,111)=

﴿ وأقسموا بالله جهد أيمـٰنهم لإن جآءتهم ءاية ليؤمنن بها قل إنما الأيـٰت عند الله وما يشعركم أنها إذا جآءت لا يؤمنون. .... ولو أننا نزلنآ إليهم الملـٰٓئكة وكلمهم الموتىٰ وحشرنا عليهم كلّ شىء قُبُلا ما كانوا ليؤمنوا إلا أن يشاء الله ولـٰكنّ أكثرهم يجهلون ﴾ (٦ :١٠٩، ١١١)

"And even though there were a Qur'ân wherewith the mountains were moved and the earth cleft assunder or the dead made to speak (it would have been the same). Rather, the command is with Allah in all affairs..." (13:31)=

﴿ ولو أن قرءانا سيرت به الجبال أو قُطّعت به الأرض أو كُلّم به الموتىٰ بل لله الأمر جميعا... ﴾ (١٣ :٣١)

Thirdly, the fact that the unbelievers' demands for the performance of acts apecified by them were not met does not mean that they were not shown appropriate and convincing "signs" or "miracles". On the contrary, they were provided with all sorts of miracles — intellectual, physical and historical — except those they specifically demanded, and that for reasons mentioned below. As regards the intellectual miracle, it was pointed out that the Qur'ân itself was (and is) a sufficient miracle. "And is it not enough for them that We have sent down to you the Book which is recited unto them? Verily there is in it mercy and reminder for a people who believe." (29:51)=

﴿ أولم يكفهم أنآ أنزلنا عليك الكتـٰب يتلىٰ عليهم إن فى ذٰلك لرحمة و ذكرىٰ لقوم يؤمنون ﴾ (٢٩ :٥١)

Indeed the Qur'ân is an abiding miracle in three important respects. It was given out by a person who acknowledgedly had not received any formal education and who, even according to the unbelievers' own admission, was himself incapable of producing the text so that they sometimes characterized it as evident magic (سحر مبين) and at other times alleged that he had been prompted or dictated by others. It is also a miracle in respect of its contents. Among other things it contains statements about the facts and secrets of nature that are becoming clear to man only with the progress of scientific knowledge and that could not have been stated by any individual on the basis of the then existing human knowledge. Again, the Qur'ân is a lin-

guistic miracle in respect of its inimitable diction, style of expression and presentation of the themes and facts. Not for nothing does it repeatedly throw out challenges for anyone to come up with anything like it.

Along with this intellectual miracle, physical miracles also were provided. There are reports informing us that the Prophet performed, with Allah's leave and authorization, some other miracles from time to time. The most important in this series of physical miracles was the cleaving of the moon in two parts which was viewed by a number of on-lookers. This particular miracle is reffered to in the Qur'ân along with the usual reaction of the die-hard unbelievers as follows: "The hour (of reckoning) has drawn near; and the moon is split. But if they see a sign they say: 'A transient sorcery." (54:1-2)= ﴿اقتربت الساعة وانشق القمر * و إن يروا ءاية يعرضوا ويقولوا سحر مستمر﴾.[1]

The performance was no "sorcery", but it was of course transient and experienced only by the viewers at the time. Therefore the Qur'ân repeatedly draws attention to the continuous miracles and wonderous "signs" of Allah that exist all arround us — in nature, in the universe and in man and other creatures. The way reference is made to these 'signs' leaves no room for doubt that it is done in reply to the demand not only of the unbelievers of Makka but of all times for 'signs' and miracles. Thus, if the appearance of the moon in two equal parts was transient, its regular and repeated transformation through a specific period from the shape of a narrow leaf to a full circular form, and indeed its orbiting round the earth, are no transient features and no less wonderous. Nor are the sun and the moon accidental entities. They have been created and subjected to a definite law and course for definite purposes and functions by the Lord of all creation, and that also for a specific time which is determined by and known to Him alone. Man's intellect and consciousness are repeatedly roused to such phenomena of the physical world and each time it is emphasized that each phenomenon constitutes a wonderous "sign" of Allah. Of such numerous passages in the Qur'ân the following may be cited as instances:

﴿ومن ءايـٰته أن خلقكم من تراب ثم إذآ أنتم بشر تنتشرون * ومن ءايـٰته أن خلق لكم من أنفسكم أزوٰجا لتسكنوٓا إليها وجعل بينكم مودة ورحمة إن فى ذٰلك لأيـٰت لقوم يتفكرون * ومن ءايـٰته خلق السمـٰوٰت والأرض واختلـٰف ألسنتكم وألوٰنكم إن فى ذٰلك لأيـٰت للعـٰلِمين * ومن ءايـٰته منامكم بالّيل والنّهار وابتغاؤكم من فضله

1. There are a number of authentic reports about the incident. See for instance *Bukhârî,* nos. 3868-3871, 4864-4858; *Muslim,* nos. 2800-2803; Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr,* VII, 448-450; Al-Suyûṭî, *Al-Durr al-Manthûr,* V, pp. 669-671.

إن في ذٰلك لأيـٰـت لقوم يسمعون * ومن ءايـٰته يريكم البرق خوفا وطمعا وينزّل من السمآء مآء فيحي به الأرض بعد موتها إن في ذٰلك لأيـٰـت لقوم يعقلون * ومن ءايـٰته أن تقوم السمآء والأرض بأمره ثم إذا دعاكم دعوة من الأرض إذا أنتم تخرجون ﴾ (٣٠ : ٢٠-٢٥)

"And it is of His *signs* that He has created you of soil, and lo, you are human beings dispersed (far and wide). And it is of His *signs* that He created for you mates (pairs) from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them. And he has ordained love and kindness between you. Verily in that are sure signs for a people who reflect. And of his *signs* is the creation of the skies and the earth, and the variations in your languages and in your colours. Verily in that are signs for a people who have knowledge. And of His *signs* are your sleeping by night and day and your seeking of His bounty (i.e. quest for livelihood). Verily in that are sure signs for those who heed. And of His *signs* is that He shows you the lightning by way of fear and hope; and He sends down from the sky water and therewith He gives life to the earth after it has been dead (barren). Verily in that are signs for a people who understand. And it is of His *signs* that the sky and the earth are in their positions by His command. Then when He calls you by a single call, lo, from the earth you come out." (30:20-25)

﴿هو الذى أنزل من السمآء مآء لكم منه شراب ومنه شجر فيه تسيمون* ينبت لكم به الزّرع والزّيتون والنّخيل والأعنـٰب ومن كل الثّمرٰت إن في ذٰلك لأية لقوم يتفكرون* وسخّر لكم الّيل والنّهار والشّمس والقمر والنّجوم مسخّرٰت بأمره إن في ذٰلك لأيـٰـت لّقوم يعقلون* وما ذرأ لكم في الأرض مختلفا ألوٰنه إن في ذٰلك لأيـة لّقوم يذكرون ﴾ (١٦ : ١٠-١٣)

"It is He Who sends down from the sky water for you, there is drink therefrom, and out of it (grows) vegetation (trees) in which you graze (your cattle). With it He produces for you corn, olives, date-palms, grapes and every kind of fruit. Verily there is in that a sure sign for a people who reflect. And he has subordinated the night and the day for you (your needs), and the sun and the moon (too). And the stars are in subjection by His command.Verily in that are sure signs for a people who understand. And all that He has scattered for you in this earth of different colours (types). Verily in that is a sure sign for a people who contemplate." (16:10-13)

﴿وءاية لّهم الأرض الميتة أحيينـٰها وأخرجنا منها حبا فمنه يأكلون * وجعلنا فيها جنّـٰت من نّخيل وأعنـٰب وفجّرنا فيها من العيون * ليأكلوا من ثمره وما عملته أيديهم أفلا يشكرون * سبحـٰن الذى خلق الأزوٰج كلّها مما تنبت الأرض ومن أنفسهم ومما لا يعلمون * وءاية لهم اليل نسلخ منه النهار فإذا هم مظلمون * والشّمس تجرى لمستقرّ لها ذٰلك تقدير العزيز العليم * والقمر قدرنـٰه منازل حتىٰ عاد كالعرجون القديم * لا الشّمس ينبغى لها أن تدرك القمر ولا الّيل سابق النّهار وكلّ في فلك يسبحون * وءايـة لّهم أن حملنا ذرّيّتهم في الفلك المشحون ﴾ (٣٦ : ٣٣-٤١)

1. There are indeed a large number of such passages in the Qur'an drawing attention to the "signs" of Allah. See for instance Q. 6:95-99; 7:57-58; 10:67; 13:2-4; 16:65-67, 69, 79; 17:12; 26:7-8; 28:86; 29:44.

"And a sign for them is the dead earth. We give it life and produce from it grain, so they eat of it. And We lay in it gardens of date-palms and grape-vines; and We cause springs to gush forth in it, that they may eat of its fruits. Their hands did not do it. Will they not then give thanks. Glory be to Him Who created all the pairs (of sexes) of what the land grows and of themselves and of what they do not know. And a sign for them is the night. We strip it of the day and lo, they are in darkness. And the sun moves on to its appointed time and place; that is the ordaining of the All-Mighty, the All Knowing. And the moon, we have appointed for it stages, till it reverts to the like of an old date-stalk. Neither is it for the sun to overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day. And each floats along an orbit. And a sign for them is that We carried their progeny (through the deluge) in the laden ark." (36:33-41)

Besides these "miracles" of creation and of the universe attention was drawn also to the instance of previous Prophets and the retribution that befell their respective peoples on account of their persistent disbelief and disobedience even after they had been provided with clear *signs* as demanded by them. These were cited as "standing signs" because knowledge and memories of them were so universal and fresh and the scenes of destruction and ruins of those peoples were so vivid and well-known that no one could question the truth and miraculous nature of those events. Particular mention in this connection was made to the Prophets Mûsâ (Moses), Nûḥ, Hûd, Ṣâliḥ, Shu'ayb and Lûṭ (peace be on them) and the punishment of their respective peoples for their persistent disbelief and sins. Thus 26:60-67 gives an account of how Pharaoh and his followers rejected the truth even though Mûsâ (p.b.h.) had shown them unmistakable 'signs' and how they were ultimately drowned while Mûsâ and his followers escaped harm. It concludes by emphasizing: "Verily in that is a sure sign; but most of them do not believe" ﴿إن فى ذٰلك لأية وما كان أكثرهم مؤمنين﴾. The instance of Nûḥ (p.b.h.), his peoples' intransigence, the deluge and the saving of the believers on the Ark are referred to in 26:114-119 and *'âyah* 121 repeats the assertion: "Verily in that is a sure sign; but most of them do not believe."[1] Again, the instance of Prophet Hûd (p.b.h.) and his people, the 'Âd, and the latter's destruction on account of their arrogance and rejection of the truth are refered to in 26:123-139; and it concludes with the same lesson: "Verily in that is a sure sign; but most of them do not believe."[2] The same lesson is repeated after a reference to Prophet Ṣâliḥ (p.b.h.) and the destruction of his people, the Thamûd, in

1. See also Q. 23:23-30; 29:14-15 and 54:9-15.
2. See also Q. 29:38-40.

26:141-159.[1] The reference to Prophet Lûṭ (p.b.h.) and the exemplary punishment of his people is more pointed and it ends with the same emphasis: "Verily in that is a sure sign; but most of them do not believe."[2] The scene of destruction of Lûṭ's people to the south-east of the Dead Sea is so clearly visible even today that elsewhere in the Qur'ân it is very appropriately stated: "We have indeed *left* thereof a clear sign for a people who understand" ﴿ولقد تركنا منها ءاية بينة لقوم يعقلون﴾.[3] Similary with reference to the episode of the Deluge and the Ark, which is a universally acknowledged event of history, it is stated: "We have left it as a sign; so is there anyone to take admonition?" ﴿ولقد تركنـها ءاية فهل من مدكر﴾.[4] The use of the term *taraknâ* (We left تركنا) in these *'ayahs* is very significant. It emphsizes the continuing and abiding nature of the "signs" connected with the incidents alluded to. Reference is made also to other Prophets as Shu'ayb (p.b.h.) and his people of Madayn, the "Companions of the Wood" (*'Aṣḥâb al-'Aykah*); and in each case the same emphasis is repeated: "Verily in that is a sure sign...."[5]

It may be noted that while the Makkan unbelievers were asking the Prophet to bring them a particular "sign", he was pointing out to them, through the Qur'ân, the signs of Allah existing in the universe in and in their own environment. There was no evading of the issue in that approach; for, as it was clearly stated all through, "signs" or performance of miracles belonged solely to the power of Allah; the Prophets themselves had no such power. Indeed one of the purposes in relating the historical "signs" — the instances of former peoples' disobedience and the consequent retributions befalling them — was to bring home to the Makkan unbelievers that their demad for specified miracles was not being readily met because, like the other peoples, if they persisted in their disbelief even after they had been provided with the 'sign' asked for, Allah's wrath and retribution would immediately befall them without any respite. That would be only natural; because demand for a specified 'sign' constituted a challenge to Allah's power on the one hand and to the *bona-fide* of His messenger on the other. Hence, if the unbelievers persisted in their defiance and rejection of the truth after their challenge had been met, there would remain no alternative but to award

1. See also Q. 27:45-52; 29:38.
2. Q. 26:160-175. See also 15:57-75; 27:54-58; 29:31-35; 51:31-37.
3. Q. 29:35. See also 51:37 which states: ﴿وتركنا فيها ءاية للذين يخافون العذاب الأليم﴾
4. Q. 54:15
5. See Q. 29:36-37 and 26:176-191.

them the punishment due. This was an eventuality which Allah, in His omniscience and infinite mercy, did not intend for the Makkans and which the Prophet, in his kindness and consideration for his people, did not wish for them.That was the sole reason for not meeting the Makkans' demand for the 'sign' they asked for, though other miracles were indeed caused to happen through the Prophet.

This reason is very clearly stated in 17:59 which runs as follows:

﴿وما منعنا أن نرسل بالأيـٰت إلا أن كذّب بها الأولون وءاتينا ثمود الناقة مبصرة فظلموا بها وما نرسل بالأيـٰت إلا تخويفا﴾ (١٧ :٥٩)

"Nothing hinders Us from sending down the signs (i.e. the signs asked for) except that the former peoples treated them as false. We had given the Thamûd people the she-camel as an eye-opener; but they treated her wrongfully. We do not send the 'signs' (i.e, the signs specified) except as an ultimatum." (17:59)

The punishment inflicted on the Thamûd, though not specifically mentioned, is clearly implied here. The same principle is enunciated in connection with the reply given to the demand for a table set with meal made by the people of Jesus (p.b.h.) as follows:

﴿قال الله إني منزّلها عليكم فمن يكفر بعد منكم فإنّي أعذّبه عذابا لا أعذبه, أحدا من العـٰلمين﴾ (٥ :١١٥)

"Allah said: I will send it down unto you; but whoever of you disbelieves after that, I will inflict upon him such a punishment as I have not inflicted on anyone among all the creations." (5:115).

It may also be noted that the Prophet, far from avoiding the Makkan's demand for miracles, was rather eager to obtain their conversion even by Allah's providing them with the signs they asked for. This is indicated by 6:35 quoted above,[1] which says that he would have even sought "a tunnel into the earth" or "a ladder into the sky" in order to bring them the desired sign. The same eagerness on his part is indicated in 26:3-4 which says:

﴿لعلك بـٰخع نفسك ألّا يكونوا مؤمنين * إن نّشأ ننزّل عليهم مّن السمآء ءاية فظلّت أعنـٰقهم لها خـٰضعين﴾ (٢٦ :٣-٤)

"It may be that you are afflicted with grief that they do not become believers. If it were Our will, We could send down to them a sign from the sky to which their necks would bend in humility." (26:3-4)

That the Prophet was eager for satisfying the Makkans with such a miracle as specified by them, and at the same time did not like to see a similar

1. Q. *Supra*, pp. 636-637.

fate befall them as had befallen the previous peoples, is very well illustrated by the following report. The Makkan leaders once came to the Prophet and asked him to turn the Ṣafâ into a hill of gold if he really was Allah's Messenger. He intended to pray to Allah to grant their wish. Thereupon Allah informed him that their wish might be granted; but if they did not accept the truth even after that, Allah's retribution would immediately descend on them and they would not be given any respite. He was asked whether he preferred that eventuality to the alternative of giving them respite and a chance to reform. He preferred the second alternative.[1]

Such kindness and consideration for them, however, was only misunderstood by the unbelievers. In the intensity of their disbelief and out of sheer folly they persistently demanded of the Prophet to hasten on them Allah's wrath and retribution of which he had been warning them. The Qur'ân repeatedly refers to these foolish demands on their part and provides appropriate replies to them and guuidance to the Prophet. Thus 29:53-55 states:

﴿ويستعجلونك بالعذاب ولولآ أجل مسمّى لجآءهم العذاب وليأتينّهم بغتة وهم لا يشعرون * يستعجلونك بالعذاب وإن جهنّم لمحيطة بالكـٰفرين * يوم يغشـٰهم العذاب من فوقهم ومن تحت أرجلهم ويقول ذوقوا ما كنتم تعملون﴾ (٢٩:٥٣-٥٥)

"They ask you to hasten the retibution (on them). Had there not been a term appointed, the retribution would surely have befallen them. Certainly it would have come on them unawares. They ask you to hasten the reribution (on them). Verily the hell will encompass the unbelievers. That day the punishment will engulf them from above them and from below their feet; and He will say: Taste what you used to do." (29:53-55)

Similarly 37:176-179 states:

﴿أفبعذابنا يستعجلون * فإذا نزل بساحتهم فسآء صباح المنذرين * وتولّ عنهم حتى حين * وأبصر فسوف يبصرون﴾ (٣٧:١٧٦-١٧٩)

"Do they want Our retribution to be hastened (on them)? But when it befalls their arena, evil indeed will be the dawn for those who are warned. So turn away from them for a while and watch, for they will soon see (what awaits them)." (37:176-179)

Again, 10:11 states:

﴿ولو يعجّل الله للنّاس الشرّ استعجالهم بالخير لقضى إليهم أجلهم فنذر الّذين لا يرجون لقآءنا فى طغيـٰنهم يعمهون﴾ (١٠:١١)

1. See the report in its various forms in Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr*, III, 47-48 (commentary on 17:59).

"An if Allah were to hasten for men evil as they would have the good hastened for them, then would their term have been settled at once. But We leave those who do not exepect meeting Us to wander blindly in their transgression." (10:11)

There are indeed other passages on the theme.[1] These all show the folly and unreasonableness of the unbelievers' demands on the one hand and the patience and forbearance with which they were being treated, on the other. The ultimate outcome only illustrates the Divine wisdom contained in the replies given to their demands.

1. See 6:58; 8:31-33; 13:6; 22:47; and 38:16-17.

CHAPTER XXVII

ORGANIZED OPPOSITION: II. DISSUASION, ENTICEMENTS, VIOLENCE AND PERSECUTION

Along with raising the above noted objections and engaging in argumentation with the Prophet the Quraysh leaders adopted other methods to frustrate his work and mission. They took steps to prevent people from listening to him; they attempted to divert him from his course by dangling before him the prospects of wealth and leadership and otherwise by making offers of compromise; and, simultaneously, they carried on persecution and committed violence upon the converts to make them recant and revert to idolatry. They even made several attempts to kill the Prophet and thus put an end to his movement.

I. DISSUASION

As the *ḥajj* season approached after the beginning of "open call" the Quraysh leaders took steps to prevent the pilgrims and visitors from coming in contact with the Prophet who was sure to approach them and speak to them during that time. The Quraysh leaders realized that the allegation they had been making against the Prophet of his being mad, insane, a poet, a sorcerer, etc., were all untrue and that they had been making those allegations only for the sake of opposition. They were also aware that the various allegations were inconsistent. Hence they found it necessary to adhering to some specific and plausible allegation against the Prophet which might appear sensible to the piligrims and delegates coming from all Arabia. Therefore, in a meeting of the leaders, Al-Walîd ibn al-Mughîrah urged them to adopt a uniform point of propaganda, telling them that if different persons spoke differently about Muḥammad (ﷺ) they would simply contradict and neutralize the effects of one another's assertions. At this one person proposed that the Prophet should be described as a soothsayer. To this proposal Al-Walîd objected, saying: "By Allah, he is no soothsayer. We have seen and heard many a soothsayer, but Muḥammad's talks are not like theirs." In this way proposals for describing him as an insane person, a poet, etc. were one by one made and discarded on various grounds. Ultimately Al-Walîd suggested that the nearest to what would appear to be reasonable was to describe the Prophet as a magician whose words brought about dissension in the society and created divisions between parents and their children,

between husbands and their wives and between men and their relatives. All agreed upon this plan. Accordingly, when the *ḥajj* season arrived the Quraysh leaders and their men took positions at the different points of entry into the city and as each individual or group arrived they warned them against the Prophet and asked them to keep away from him and never to pay any attention to his words.[1]

According to one view the Qur'ânic passage 74:11-25 refers to this incident, particularly to the role of Al-Walîd ibn Al-Mughîrah in planning the malpropaganda against the Prophet.[2] This manoeuvre of the Quraysh leaders, however, far from retarding the spread of Islam, rather helped its cause indirectly. Ibn Isḥâq mentions specifically that as the *ḥajj* season of that year ended and the Arabs returned home the news of the appearance of the Prophet and the inklings of his message reached the nook and corner of Arabia.[3]

While the above mentioned plan was adopted by the Quraysh leaders especially for the *ḥajj* season, they did not totally stop their other allegations. They also constantly endeavoured to prevent the Makkans from listening to the Prophet's discourses, especially his recitation of the Qur'ân, which the Quraysh leaders realized exerted an enchanting influence on the listeners. Hence whenever the Prophet recited the Qur'ân within the hearing of others the Makkan leaders and their agents created noise and raised a hue and cry to frustrate the effect of the recitation. The leaders in fact employed their men specifically for this work. These men usually followed the Prophet from place to place, created disturbances at the time of his recitation of the Qur'ân and, for that purpose, often hemmed him in from right and left. The Qur'ân refers to this manoeuvre of the unbelievers in a number of its passages. "And those who disbelieved said: 'Do not listen to this Qur'ân; and talk at random in the midst of it (the recitation), so that you may overwhelm and overcome (it): "(41:26)= (﴿وقال الذين كفروا لا تسمعوا لهذا القرءان والغوا فيه لعلكم تغلبون﴾ ٤١ : ٢٦).[4]

"What is the matter with the unbelievers that they rush on you (madly), from the right and from the left, in desultory crowds?" (70:36-37)=

1. Ibn Hishâm, 270-271; Ibn Isḥâq, *Al-Siyar wa al-Maghâzî*, 150-152.
2. *Ibid.*, 271. See also Al-Qurṭubî, *Tafsîr*, XIX, pp. 70-77.
3. Ibn Hishâm, 272. Ibn Isḥâq's statement runs as follows:

(وصدرت العرب من ذلك الموسم بأمر رسول الله ﷺ ، فانتشر ذكره في بلاد العرب كلها)

4. See also Al-Ṭabari, *Tafsîr*, XXIV, 112-113 and Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr*, VII, 162-163.

﴿فمال الّذين كفروا قبلك مهطعين * عن اليمين وعن الشمال عزين﴾ ٧٠ : ٣٦-٣٧.[1]

The unbelievers did not let the Prophet alone even while reciting the Qur'ân at prayer in his house (or at Dar al-Arqam). If such recitation was heard from outside the house they hurried to abuse him and created noise so that others might not listen to the recitation.[2] It is reported that with reference to such conduct of the unbelievers 17:110 was revealed. It directs the Prophet: "... Do not raise your voice (too much) in prayer, nor lower it (too much), but adopt a middle course between them

﴿ ... و لا تجهر بصلاتك و لا تخافت بها و ابتغ بين ذ'لك سبيلا ﴾ (١٧ : ١١٠).[3]

Even after such afforts to prevent the people from listening to the Qur'ân if anyone grew inquisitive about it and enquired of the leaders about its content and purport they put the most adverse construction upon it and distorted its meaning in order to discourage the enquirer from paying any heed to it. Often they described the revelation as nothing more than tales and legends of the ancients ﴿أسـٰطير الأولين﴾. The Qur'ân refers to this practice of the unbelieving leaders and reminds them that by so doing they would be responsible not only for their own sin but also, partially, for the sin of those uninformed people whom they misled. "And when it is said to them: 'What is it that your Lord has sent down? 'They say: 'Tales of the ancients.' Let them (thus) bear their own burdens in full, on the Day of Judgement, and also some of the burdens of those without knowledge whom they mislead..." (16:24-25=

﴿ وإذا قيل لهم ماذا أنزل ربكم قالوا أسـٰطير الأولين * ليحملوا أوزارهم كاملة يوم القيـٰمة و من أوزار الّذين يضلّونهم بغير علم... ﴾ (١٦ : ٢٤-٢٥)[4]

"Those who distort Our signs (revelation) are not hidden from Us. Is he who is cast into the fire (hell) better or he who comes safe on the Day of Resurrection? Do what you like. Surely He observes what you do." (41:40)=

﴿إن الذين يُلحدون فى ءايـٰتنا لا يخفون علينا أفمن يلقىٰ فى النّار خير أم مّن يأتى ءامنا يوم القيـٰمة اعملوا ما شئتم إنه بما تعملون بصير ﴾ (٤١ : ٤٠)

Another method to keep the people away from the Prophet was adopted by the Quraysh leaders on the suggestion of Al-Naḍr ibn al-Ḥârith. He poin-

1. See also Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsir,* XXIV, 84-85; Al-Qurṭubî, *Tafsîr,* XVIII, 292-294 and Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr,* VIII, 255-256.

2. *Musnad,* I., 23, 215; *Bukhârî,* no. 7490; *Muslim,* No. 446.

3. *Ibid.* See also Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr,* V, 126-127; Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr,* XV, 184-185.

4. See also Q. 6:25; 8:31; 23:83; 25:5; 27:68; 46:17; 68:15 and 83:13.

ted out to them that their policy of calling the Prophet a poet, an insane person, a sorcerer, etc., was unsound, untenable and self-defeating; for he was neither a poet, nor an insane person, nor a sorcerer. Al-Naḍr told them that a positive programme of diversion for the people should be drawn up such as providing them with alternative stories and tales of heroes like Rustam and Isfandiyar of Persia. The Quraysh leaders approved of the suggestion and engaged Al-Naḍr to do the job. Accordingly he obtained a knowledge of those stories and started providing diversion for the people by telling those stories in versification. Whenever the Prophet finished addressing a gathering or reciting the Qur'ân to them, Al-Naḍr immediately stood up before them, recited his stories and concluded by asking the gathering in what ways was Muḥammad (ﷺ) a better and more impressive speaker then he?[1] It is also reported that Al-Naḍr engaged singing maids to attract people so that they did not listen to the Prophet's preachings and recitation of the Qur'ân.

II. ENTICEMENTS AND ATTEMPTS AT COMPROMISE

While the Quraysh leaders employed all the tactics to dissuade the people from listening to the Prophet they at the same time attempted to entice him away from his mission by offering him wealth, position and leadership. This they tried to do when they found that their enmity and opposition, instead of deterring him, only steeled his determination to disseminate his message and that it continued to gain ground, slowly but steadily. One instance of this manoeuvre on their part has been noted above in connection with their demand for various miracles.[2] Ibn Isḥâq gives the report of another such attempt made by them, noting specifically that they did so when Ḥamzah (r.a.) embraced Islam and they saw that the number of the Prophet's followers was steadily increasing.[3] One day the Prophet was sitting alone in the Ka'aba compound. 'Utbah ibn Rabî'ah and other Quraysh leaders also were there in another part of the compound where they used to assemble. Thus finding an opportinity to talk to the Prophet in isolation 'Utbah suggested to the Quraysh leaders that if they so approved he would go to Muḥammad (ﷺ) and make him some offers of compromise, adding that he might accept some of the offers and thus refrain from his mission. The Quraysh leaders approved of 'Utbah's suggestion and authorized him to negotiate with the

1. Ibn Hishâm, 299-300. See also Al-Qurṭubî, *Tafsîr,* XIV, 52.
2. *Supra,* pp. 631-637.
3. Ibn Hishâm, I, 313.

Prophet. Understandably, the nature of the offers to be made to him were discussed and agreed upon. Accordingly 'Utbah went to him and began his talk by addressing him affectionately and telling him that he indeed had a respectable position in the society by virtue of his ancestry, but that he had greatly stirred the society and caused dissension in it by his activities. As on the other occasion, this time also 'Utbah told him that if in doing so his aim was to amass wealth or become a leader, they would give him all the wealth he desired and would also accept him as their leader, or even make him their king and would not transact any affair without his consent and approval. If, on the other hand, he was under the spell of any evil spirit, they would leave no stone unturned and would incur all the expences needed to get a cure for him. As he finished saying this the Prophet asked him whether he had anything more to say. He replied that he had said all that he had to say. Thereupon the Prophet asked him to listen and recited unto him *sûrah* 41 (*Al-fuṣṣilat*). 'Utbah listened to the recitation with rapt attention. On finishing the recitation the Prophet prostrated himself and then, after raising his head, told 'Utbah that that was what he (the Prophet) had to say in reply to his offers. He left the place in a thoughtful mood. As he approached the Quraysh leaders they observed amongst themselves that he was a changed man and that his countenance was not the same as that with which he had gone to Muḥammad (ﷺ). As 'Utbah came to them they asked what was the matter with him. He calmly replied that he had never heard the like of what he had just heard from Muḥammad (ﷺ). "By Allah", continued 'Utbah, "it is no poetry. O leaders of Quraysh, listen to me and take my advice. Let this man alone with his affair. By Allah, what I have heard of his words are full of a great message. If, then, the Arabs get the upper hand over him, you will have your work done without you yourselves doing anything; if, on the other hand, he prevails over them, his rule and honour will be your rule and honour and you will be the happiest of men on his account." Hearing this the Quraysh leaders remarked: "O Father of Al-Walîd, you have surely been bewitched by his words." 'Utbah replied that he had expressed his opinion; it was now up to them to do what they thought it fit to do.[1]

That the Quraysh leaders repeatedly made similar offers to the Prophet is evident also from the account of one of their deputations to 'Abû Ṭâlib. It is related that when 'Abû Ṭâlib informed the Prophet of what the Quraysh lea-

1. *Ibid.*, 313-314.

ders had to say he movingly replied in effect that he would not abandon his mission and would rather persist in its pursuit. The nature of his reply leaves no room for doubt that the Quraysh leaders had combined their threat and ultimatum on that accasion too with the alternative offers of wealth and position to the Prophet if only he desisted from his work.[1]

The Quraysh leaders did not leave the matter there. They attempted to deflect the Prophet from his course, indeed to frustrate his mission by offering him a compromise formula in the matter of belief and worship. Reports say that they came forward with the proposal that they would cease their hostility towards the Prophet and his followers if he only showed some consideration for their goddesses and assigned them some position in the system of beliefs he had been advocating. They even proposed that they would worship Allah for one year if the Prophet undertook to worship the idols for another year, adding that the arrangement had the advantage that if there was anything good in the worship of Allah they would benefit thereby; whereas the Prophet and his followers would reciprocally derive the benefit of whatever good was there in the worship of the idols. The Prophet of course rejected this absurd proposal. It was with reference to such manoeuvres of the unbelieving leaders that Allah instructed his messenger as follows:

﴿قل يـٰأيها الكـٰفرون * لا أعبد ما تعبدون * ولا أنتم عـٰبدون ما أعبد * ولا أنا عابد ما عبدتم * ولا أنتم عـٰبدون ما أعبد * لكم دينكم ولىَ دين﴾ (١٠٩)

"Say: 'O you the unbelievers, I do not worship what you worship; nor do you worship what I worship. And I will not worship what you have been wont to worship; nor will you worship what I worship. For you is your way (*dîn*); for me mine."**2** (109)

On another occasion the Quraysh leaders came to the Prophet and similarly asked him to make some concessions to their goddesses. According to one report they on one night sat with the Prophet and conversed with him till the morning, placating him with soft words and addressing him as their leader and suggesting to him the advisability of making some compromise with regard to the goddesses, at least as a face-saving device for the leaders to follow him. Another version of the report specifically mentions

1. *Infra*, p. 659.

2. Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr*, VIII, 527; Al-Shawkani, *Tafsîr*, V, 506; Al-Wâḥidî, *'Asbâb etc.*, (ed Al-Sayyid Aḥmad Ṣaqr), second print, 1404/1984, p. 505; Ibn Hishâm, I, 388.

'Umayyah ibn Khalaf and 'Abû Jahl as among the leaders who thus approached the Prophet. The Qur'ânic passage 17:73-73 alludes to the incident and states how Allah protected his Messenger against the nefarious design of the unbelieving leaders. It runs as follows:

﴿ وإن كادوا ليفتنونك عن الّذى أوحينا إليك لتفترى علينا غيره وإذا لّاتخذوك خليلا * ولولا أن ثبتنـٰك لقد كدت تركن إليهم شيئا قليلا * إذا لّأذقنـٰك ضعف الحيوٰة وضعف الممات ثم لا تجد لك علينا نصيرا ﴾(١٧ :٧٣-٧٦)

"And they attempted indeed to lure you away from what we had revealed to you, in order that you forge against us something else. In that case they would certainly have accepted you as a friend. And had We not made you firm you would almost have been inclined towards them a little. In that case We should have made you taste double the punishment in this life as also double the punishment on death; and then you would have found none to help you as against us." (17:74-76)

The passage shows clearly that the Prophet had not made even the slightest move towards a compromise with the unbelieving leaders, for Allah protected him against such a pitfall by strengthening his mind and making him firm in matters of belief and principles. Even putting the most unfavourable construction on the passage it may only be said to refer to the Prophet's state of mind vis-a-vis the unbelievers' manoeuvres, rather than to any act of compromise on his part. On the contrary the last *'âyah* (76) reminds him of the gravity of the offence of making even the slightest compromise in matters of belief and principles. It is a warning and guidance for him (as well as for the believers), and in no sense a disapproval of an act already committed.

It is also obvious from the instances cited above, and from the Qur'ân and the reports in general, that it was always the Makkan leaders who took the initiative and made the various proposals for a compromise. This was only natural on their part; for it was their position and vested interests that were threatened by the new message and that these they were eager to preserve by any means. The Prophet, on the other hand, was commissioned and inspired by Allah to deliever a message and to warn the people.There was thus no question of his ever being desirous for making a compromise with the unbelievers. Moreover, Allah had sufficiently forewarned and instructed him about the difficulties and suffering that lay ahead and also about the manoeuvres of the unbelievers. Thus the very first commission to preach contained a directive to bear with patience all the hardships that he would face on account of his work. "And for the sake of your lord have patience." (74:7)= ﴿ولربك فاصبر﴾ In another very early revelation he is warned: "They

desire, if you be compromising, they will also compromise. But do not heed every deceitful oath-maker — a slanderer going about with calumies."(68:9-11)= ﴿ودّوا لو تدهن فيدهنون * و لا تطع كلّ حلاف مّهين * همّاز مشاء بنميم﴾ According to the commentators, the reference here is to 'Abû Jahl; but the description would as well apply to many other Quraysh leaders. It is also noteworthy that the passage clearly states that it was the Quraysh leaders who desired a compromise. Further, it shows that they were not sincere in showing that attitude; for, some of them, while making promises of compromise, in fact went about back-biting and slandering the Prophet. Besides these passages there are also a number of other passages which, while emphasizing that what the Prophet was giving out was indeed from Allah, and that if he ever attributed any saying falsely to Him, he would be severely punished. "If he (the Messenger) were to falsely attribute any fabricated saying against Us, We should certainly seize him by the right hand, and We should certainly then cut off the artery of his heart..."(69:44-46) ﴿ولو تقوّل علينا بعض الأقاويل * لأخذنا منه باليمين * ثم لقطعنا منه الوتين﴾. In view of such clear warnings and instructions given him since the very beginning of his mission, it would simply be unreasonable to think that the Prophet would ever intend to make a compromise with the unbelieving leaders on matters of faith and worship (*tawḥîd*) just for the sake of avoiding their opposition, enmity and even persecution.

III VIOLENCE AND PERSECUTION

That simultaneously with the above mentioned methods the Quraysh leaders had recourse also to the use of force in order to stop the Prophet and compel the new converts to recant is all too clear from the sources. To begin with, the Quraysh leaders opposed the Prophet's and the Muslims' praying in their new manner near the Ka'ba or at any public place. They were attacked and assaulted if they attempted to do so. It was because of such opposition and attacks that the Muslims, as already pointed out, began to perform prayers at solitary and out-of-the-way valleys. Even then their opponents were on their track and attacked them whenever they were detected. One such incident was serious enough leading to the fixing of Dâr al-Arqam as the place of meeting and prayer for the Muslims.

The leading part in this sort of opposing was played by 'Abû Jahl. The Qur'ân refers to this role of his as follows: ﴿أرءيت الذى ينهىٰ * عبدا إذا صلىٰ﴾ (٩٦:٩-١٠) "Do you see the one who forbids a servant (of Allah) when he prays?" (96:9-10). The servant of Allah mentioned here clearly refers to the

Prophet while his opponent, as indicated by the other *'âyahs* of the *sûrah* considered himself self-sufficient, possessing wealth and counting on the support of his people. The expression *nâdiyah* in the 17th *'âyah* means either his followers or the well-known Dâr al-Nadwah, the council of the Quraysh elders, who used to meet for public purposes at a fixed place in the Ka'ba coumpound. The reports specifically mention 'Abû Jahl who answers well the Qur'ânic description and also say that he made several attempts to prevent the Prophet from praying at the Ka'ba, intending to assault him, but was held back each time by frightful sights presented by the angels.[1]

There were of course others from among the unbelievers who made similar attempts as the Qur'ân says at another place: ﴿ وأنه لَمّا قام عبد الله يدعوه كادوا يكونون عليه لبدا ﴾ (١٩:٧٢) "Yet, when the servant of Allah stood to invoke Him, they (i.e.the unbelievers) were about to mob him from all sides." (72:19).[2] One such person was 'Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'ayṭ. One day when the Prophet was praying near the Ka'ba 'Uqbah, instigated by 'Abû Jahl and other Quraysh leaders, took the intestines and other abdominal wastes of a slaughtered she-camel and threw them upon the Prophet's back as he prostrated himself. The Quraysh leaders burst into laughter as they saw this horrible and wicked sight. It was only when his litte daughter Fâṭimah (may Allah be pleased with her) came and removed the wastes that he could raise his head.[3]

While the Prophet was the main target of the unbelievers' enmity, individual converts also did not escape punishment and torture. Whenever a person was known to have embraced Islam, he was assaulted and was subjected to various forms of torture and persecution including confinement and withholding of food and drink from him in order to make him recant and return to the old faith. It is on record that when a person of family and position embraced Islam 'Abû Jahl went to him, rebuked him severely for his having abandoned his ancestral religion, threatened to destroy his trade, to boycott him and to disgrace and degrade him in all possible ways.[4] Usually the convert's own clan and family took the lead in punishing and persecuting him.

1. See Ibn Hishâm, I (ed. Tadmurî), p. 328.
2. Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr*, VIII, 460-461.
3. *Bukharî*, no. 3854; Al-Dhahabî, *Al-Sîrat*, 216.
4. Ibn Hishâm, I, 320.

The cases of assault and persecution upon 'Abû Bakr, Ṭalḥah and 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ûd have already been mentioned.[1] There were many others like them who were similarly treated. When Al-Zubayr ibn Al-'Awwâm embraced Islam his uncle arrested him and rolled him up in a mat and, among other forms of torture, kept him upon intense heat and smoke in order to compel him to forsake his new faith. He bore all the punishment with patience and did not give up his faith.[2] On 'Uthman ibn 'Affan's conversion his uncle Al-Ḥakam[3] tied him up and threatened not to release him till he abjured Islam. He bore the torture for a long time and did not give in.[4] Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr, on his conversion, was very badly tortured by his cousin (paternal uncle's son) 'Uthmân ibn Ṭalḥah. Mus'ab was also seized and kept confined by his relatives. Ultimately he managed to escape and was among the first group of people who migrated to Abyssinia.[5] When Khâlid ibn Sa'îd ibn al-'Âṣ embraced Islam he fled home out of fear of his father, 'Abû 'Uḥayḥah, who nonetheless caught him and repeatedly beat him up severely in order to make him recant and return to the ancestral religion. He was kept confined for a number of days without being given anything to eat or drink. Even then he did not give in. At last his father disowned him and expelled him from home. He also went to Abyssinia with the first batch of immigrants.[6] Even when 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭab, once the firebrand of the Quraysh against the Muslims embraced Islam, he was not spared by the unbelievers. As already mentioned,[7] he had to move from place to place in order to avoid being mobbed and assaulted by the people. He found security in Al-'Âṣ ibn Wâ'il's offering him his protection.[8] The fact that 'Umar was thus protected by a person of another clan shows that his own clan had disowned him.[9]

Usually the convert's parents and relatives brought all sorts of pressure upon him and also beat him and tortured him to make him recant. In the pro-

1. *Supra,* pp. 517-518.
2. *Al- 'Iṣâbah,* I, 545, no. 2789.
3. Father of the 'Ummayd *Khalîfah* Marwân.
4. Ibn Sa'd, III, 55.
5. Ibn Sa'd, I, 204.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Supra,* pp. 533-534.
8. *Bukharî,* nos. 3864-65.
9. See *infra,* pp. 667-668.

cess he was also put under a heavy psychological and moral pressure, that of obeying the parents and preserving and continuing the ancestral religion and tradition. It was indeed a constant and strong allegation of the unbelievers that the Prophet was abusing their ancestors, destroying their ancestral religion and breaking up families by seducing sons and daughters from their parents. The issue in fact came to the fore in connection with the conversion of Sa'd ibn Abî Waqqâṣ. His mother Ḥamnah bint Sufyân ibn 'Umayyah ('Abu Sufyân's niece, i.e. brother's daughter) went on a hunger strike, vowing not to touch any food, nor any drink until her son forsook Muḥammad (ﷺ), reminding her son that it was the primary duty imposed by all religions to serve and obey one's parents. The situation so perturbed Sa'd that he urged the problem upon the Prophet. The guidance in the matter was given in the revelation of 29:8 which runs as follows:

﴿ ووصّينا الإنسـٰـن بوٰلديه حسنا وإن جـٰـهداك لتشرك بى ما ليس لك به علم فلا تطعهمآ إلىّ مرجعكم فأنبئكم بما كنتم تعملون ﴾ (٢٩: ٨)

"We have enjoined on man to be dutiful to his parents; but if they (either of them) strive to make you associate with Me anything of which you have no knowledge, then do not obey them (in this matter). To me is the return of all of you, when I will make you realize what you all used to do."(29:8)[1]

Indeed there was no case of conversion at Makka which escaped punishment and violent persecution. Because of that situation the Muslims are found even after the so-called period of "secret preaching", in fact throughout the Makkan period, attempting to keep their change of faith concealed and performing prayers secretively. The Quraysh leaders' violent opposition and enmity to the new faith were so well known even to the people of distant tribes that whenever any of their members came to Makka to enquire about the new faith he used to contact the Prophet secretly and if he embraced Islam was usually advised by the Prophet not to announce it openly at Makka. Some spirited souls like 'Abu Dharr al-Ghifârî did not, however, heed that advice of caution and, as noted earlier, was not spared as a visitor from an outside tribe but was assaulted and beaten almost to the point of death.[2]

1. See Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr,* VI, 275 (comment on 29:8); Al-Zamakhsharî, *Al-Kashshâf,* III, 184-185. According to another view the passage in question was revealed in connection with a similar situation relating to 'Ayyâsh ibn 'Abî Rabî'ah al-Makhzûmî.

2. *Supra,* pp. 537-538.

More vulnerable were, however, the slaves and persons of foreign extraction who settled at Makka as small traders and craftsmen. While the former (slaves) were completely at the mercy of their unbelieving masters, the latter (small traders and craftsmen) were in no better position. For, immediately on conversion their protectors (*ḥalîfs*) invariably maltreated and tortured them almost as slaves. They also forthwith faced boycott and loss of trade and profession. It is on record that many of them became destitutes on conversion to Islam so that the Prophet assigned them in ones or twos to-well-to-do converts for maintenance and support.[1] Even then not all of them escaped torture and persecution. The sources supply us with harrowing tales of inhuman torture upon many of them. Some of the instances are as follows.

One notable instance is that of Khabbâb ibn al-Aratt. Originally from Iraq he was caught by the Rabî'ah tribe and sold as slave to a family of Banû Khuzâ'ah, a confederate of Banû Zuhrah. He was a swordsmith by profession. His profession and trade were ruined on acount of his conversion. The unbelievers tortured him inhumanly. Once he was tied up and put on a pit of burning charcoal which severely burnt his back and left permanent scars on it. During the *khilâfah* of 'Umar Khabbâb once showed those scars on his back.[2]

The accounts of torture upon 'Ammâr and his family are no less heart-rending. 'Ammâr's father Yâsir ibn 'Âmir came from Yaman and settled at Makka as a confederate (*ḥalif*) of 'Abû Ḥudhayfa ibn al-Mughîrah of Banû Makhzûm (Abû Jahl's uncle). 'Abû Ḥudhayfah gave his slave-maid Sumayyah bint Khayyâṭ in marriage to Yâsir and 'Ammâr and his brother 'Abd Allah were born to them. 'Abû Ḥudhayfah died when Islam came. 'Ammâr, his parents and brother embraced Islam at a very early date and were severely tortured by the people of Banû Makhzûm, particularly by 'Abû Jahl. Often they were made to lie on burning sands on mid-summer days. Sometimes the Prophet passed by them while they were in such a state of persecution and asked them to bear with patience the persecution, assuring them of the reward of paradise in the hereafter. 'Abû Jahl tortured Yâsir, his wife Sumayyah and their son 'Abd allah to death. Only 'Ammâr survived the inhuman torture.[3]

1. *Supra,* p. 533.
2. Ibn Sa'd, III, 164-165.
3. Ibn Hishâm, 319-320; Ibn Isḥâq, *Al-Siyar wa al-Maghâzî,* 192. Ibn Sa'd, III, 233, 246-249.

Others like Ṣuhayb ibn Sinân, Fukayhah and 'Âmir ibn Fuhayrah were similarly tortured.[1] A classic case, however, was that of Bilâl (ibn Rabâḥ). He was 'Umayyah ibn Khalaf's slave and was one of the very early converts to Islam. 'Umayyah used to torture him inhumanly. Often at the noon of hot summer days, when the bare stony ground of Makka usually burns with heat,'Umayyah made Bilâl lie bare-bodied on such ground and placed heavy and similarly hot stones on his chest and threatened to keep him in that state till the forsook Muḥammad (ﷺ) and his religion. Bilâl would not give in even on the point of death and would only cry "One", "One" (*'aḥad*), signifying his denunciation of polytheism. Sometimes 'Umayyah would have him tied with a rope and given over to the street urchins who would then drag him through the streets of Makka. One day 'Abû Bakr saw him thus tortured and asked 'Umayyah if he was not at all afraid of Allah about that poor fellow (Bilâl). 'Umayyah retortingly told 'Abû Bakr that he was in fact the cause of the poor man's suffering and therefore it behoved him to rescue the poor fellow. At this 'Abû Bakr proposed to exchange his stronger black slave, who was on the old faith, for Bilâl. 'Umayyah accepted the deal. 'Abû Bakr took Bilâl and then freed him.[2]

'Abû Bakr similarly rescued and freed with his own money at least half-a-dozen other slaves and helpless persons from the persecution of their masters. The sources specially mention the following:[3]

(1) Ḥamâmah (Bilâl's mother)[4]

(2) 'Âmir ibn Fuhayrah, slave of Ṭufayl ibn al-Ḥârith.[5]

(3) 'Abû Fukayhah, a slave of Banû 'Abd al-Dâr.[6]

(4) Lubaynah of Lubaybah. Ibn Hishâm mentions her as a slave of Banû Mu'ammal and says that 'Umar, while still an unbeliever, used to torture her severely.[7]

1. Ibid, III, 227-230 and 248.
2. Ibn Hishâm, I, 317-318; Ibn Sa'd, III, 232-233.
3. *Ibid.*, aslo Ibn Isḥâq, *Al-Siyar wa al-Maghâzî,* 121
4. *Al-'Iṣâbah,* V, p. 1813, no. 3301.
5. Ibn Hishâm, I, 318.
6. *'Usd al-Ghâbah,* V, p. 248, No. 6142.
7. Ibn Hishâm, I, 319.

(5) Nahdiyah and her daughter. They were slaves of a lady of Banû 'Abd al-Dâr who used to torture them.[1]

(6) Zannîrah (al-Rûmiyah). She was a slave of a person of Banû 'Addiyy and 'Umar, while an unbeliever, used to torture her. Other reports mention her as a slave of a person of Banû Makhzûm and 'Abû Jahl as her persecutor.[2]

(7) 'Umm 'Ubays (or 'Unays or 'Umays). She was slave-maid of a member of Banû Zuhrah, and Al-Aswad ibn Yaghûth used to torture her.[3]

With reference to such generosity on 'Abû Bakr's part his father used to tell him that if he had spent his wealth on freeing strong and able-bodied persons, instead of women and weaklings, they could have strengthened his arm and helped him against his adversaries. To this remark 'Abû Bakr replied by saying that he did what he did for the sake of Allah Alone. According to some reports the Qur'ânic passage 92:17-20 has reference to this aspect of 'Abû Bakr's activities.[4]

IV. PRESSURE UPON BANÛ HÂSHIM

The Quraysh leaders were intent upon silencing the Prophet by violent means; but here their social system stood in their way. As the clans were more or less independent with regard to their own affairs and as clan affinity and interests overrode all other considerations, it followed that an individual convert could be, and was in fact, punished by his own clan or family or, in the case of a confederate, by the clan or family to which he was attached. If there was an exception to this general rule, it happened only with the implicit approval or connivance of the clan concerned. One outcome of this situation was that the Prophet, though the main target of the Quraysh leaders, could not be violently stopped except with the approval and cooperation of his own clan, Banû Hâshim (and Banû al-Muṭṭalib). The latter, however, though almost entirely disinclined to Islam, were, with the exception of Abû Lahab, at the same time not only averse to punishing the Prophet themselves for his opinions but were strongly opposed to his being persecuted or harmed by others. Hence, if he was to be forcibly silenced, as the

1. *Ibid.,* 318-319.
2. *Ibid.,* 318; *'Usd al-Ghâbah,* V, 462.
3. *Ibid.,* V, 601; Ibn Hishâm, I, 318.
4. Ibn Hishâm, I, 319. Ibn Isḥâq, *Al-Siyar wa al-Maghâzî,* 193-194. Qurṭubi, *Tafsir,* XX, 88-89.

unbelieving leaders wanted him to be, they had either to obtain the consent or connivance of Banû Hâshim or to be ready for a direct conflict and fighting with them.

Naturally the Quraysh leaders first attempted to bring Banû Hâshim to their point of view and repeatedly approached its leader, 'Abû Ṭâlib, the Prophet's uncle and guardian, for the purpose. The reports mention at least three deputations made by the Quraysh leaders to 'Abû Ṭâlib. These deputations, though apparently peaceful manoeuvres, were really motivated by the Quraysh leaders' determination to use violent means against the Prophet; for, their main purpose in leading those deputations was to persuade Banû Hâshim in general, and 'Abû Ṭâlib in particular, either themselves to force the Prophet to stop his mission or to allow them a free hand to deal with him and to stop him, it necessary, by killing him.

As regards the first deputation Ibn Isḥâq states that when the Quraysh leaders found that the Prophet was continuing the work of preaching in spite of their opposition and objections, they led a deputation to his uncle 'Abû Ṭâlib. It consisted of 'Utbah ibn Rabî'ah, his brother Shaybah ibn Rabi'ah, 'Abû Sufyân ibn Ḥarb, 'Abû al-Bakhtarî, Al-Aswad ibn al-Muṭṭalib, 'Abû Jahl, Al-Walîd ibn al-Mughîrah, Nubayh ibn al-Ḥajjâj, his brother Munabbih ibn al-Ḥajjâj, 'Al-Âṣ ibn Wâ'il and some others. They went to 'Abû Ṭâlib and strongly complained to him that his nephew had been abusing their deities, denouncing their religion, befooling their sagacity and declaring their forefathers as misguided and in perdition. They pressed 'Abû Ṭâlib either to stop his nephew or not to come between him and them. They also reminded 'Abû Ṭâlib that he, like them, followed the same religion so that they should suffice him as against his nephew. 'Abû Ṭâlib listened to their representations patiently and attempted to pacify them by soft and sweet words but did not commit himself to any definite course of action. The Quraysh leaders then went away.[1]

Since 'Abû Ṭâlib did not do anything to restrain the Prophet and he continued his work of propagation, the Quraysh leaders led a second deputation to 'Abû Ṭâlib. The purpose of this delegation was to deliver an ultimatum to him. They addressed him by mentioning that on account of his age and nobility he had a respectable position in the Makkan society and that therefore they had asked him to stop his nephew; but since he ('Abû Ṭâlib)

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 264-265.

had not done anything in that regard, they would no longer tolerate the activities of the Prophet and would fight him and also 'Abû Ṭâlib and Banû Hâshim till either of the two sides was vanquished. Thus delivering the ultimatum the Quraysh leaders left him.[1]

The situation was indeed very delicate and difficult for 'Abû Ṭâlib. On the one hand he did not want to see the other Quraysh clans turn against him and Banû Hâshim in a hostile combination; on the other hand he could not persuade himself to abandoning his nephew and surrendering him to his enemies. In such a state of acute mental tension he sent for the Prophet and when he came told him all about the Quraysh leaders' ultimatum and asked him not to impose upon him ('Abû Ṭâlib) a burden which he would not be able to carry. The Prophet thought that the Quraysh leaders' pressure and ultimatum had weakened his uncle and he was about to abandon him. Therefore he addressed his uncle by saying in effect that he would not give up his mission but would rather continue it till Allah made it a success or he himself perished in the process. As he uttered these words he was so moved with emotion that tears filled his eyes and he turned to leave the room. His demeanour and determination stirred 'Abû Ṭâlib's affection. He called back the Prophet, comforted him and told him to go on doing his work, assuring him that he ('Abû Ṭâlib) would never abondon him nor give him up to his enemies.[2]

This account of the second Quraysh deputation to 'Abû Ṭâlib brings into proper relief both his difficulty and attitude on the one hand, and the Prophet's determination to carry on his mission against all odds, on the other. The Prophet's address to his uncle suggests, as indicated earlier, that the Quraysh leaders had most probably combined their ultimatum with a reiteration of their offer of wealth and position to him if only he abandoned his mission.

V. ATTEMPTS TO KILL THE PROPHET

The Quraysh leaders now hit upon a new plan to get rid of the Prophet without running the risk of a bloody and internecine conflict. Acting upon the well-known rule of tribal justice to offer a man for a man the Quraysh leaders decided to give one of their best youths to 'Abû Ṭâlib and in

1. *Ibid.*, 284.
2. *Ibid.*

exchange to take the person of the Prophet for their doing with him whatever they liked to do. Accordingly one day they took with them 'Umrah ibn al-Walîd ibn al-Mughîrah, son of one of their prominent leaders and said to be the strongest and most handsome of the Quraysh youths. They went to 'Abû Ṭâlib and asked him to accept 'Umrah as a son, derive benefit from his assistance and intelligence and, in exchange, to surrender the Prophet to them so that they could kill him and put an end to all the troubles, adding that his ('Abû Ṭâlib's) nephew had not only turned against his and his forefathers' religion but had also caused dissension among the people and befooled their forbearance. As the Quraysh leaders finshed their proposal 'Abû Ṭâlib indignantly replied: "You have indeed come forward with a very bad and unjust deal. You ask me to feed and maintain your son for you, and in return to surrender to you my son so that you may kill him. By Allah I shall never agree to that." At this reply one of the Quraysh leaders, Muṭ'im ibn 'Adîyy ibn Nawfal, attempted to pacify and persuade 'Abû Ṭâlib by saying that it was but a just proposal to offer a man for a man and that the Quraysh leaders were only trying to extricate him from a situation which he himself did not like, but it appeared that he was not amenable to any reasonable proposal. 'Abû Ṭâlib firmly rejected the argument and plainly told them that he would never surrender the Prophet so they could do whatever they liked.[1]

It may be noted that it was of course a recognized rule of tribal justice to offer and take a life for a life and thus avoid prolonged blood-feud; but the Quraysh leaders' proposal did not quite conform to that rule. Their proposal was not only preemptive; it also fell far short of the requirements of the rule. They offered their man not to be killed, but only to be adopted as a son by 'Abû Ṭâlib, whereas they wanted to take the Prophet not for adopting him as a son but professedly to kill him. Hence 'Abû Ṭâlib's reply that it was a very unjust proposal was quite correct.

The incident is significant in three important respects. It shows the extent of the Quraysh leaders' enmity and determination to kill the Prophet, making it also clear that they did not make any secret of their intention. The fact that they offered in exchange the son of one of their prominent leaders, Al-Walîd ibn al-Mughîrah, only highlights the seriousness of this determination of theirs. Secondly, the incident illustrates the growth of a combination of all the other clans against the Prophet and Banû Hâshim. Thirdly, it equally

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 285-286.

illustrates the determination of 'Abû Ṭâlib and Banû Hâshim in general to defend the Prophet and their defiance of the combination of the other clans. Henceforth, as Ibn Isḥâq states, the situation became very tense and both the sides were clearly on a confrontation and war course.[1] In fact Ibn Isḥaq notes two specific developments that followed the incident. On the one hand the Quraysh clans now all and each turned against the Muslums and followers of the Prophet from among the members of their respective clans and started a severe campaign of persecution and torture upon them in order to make them recant and return to the old faith.[2] It further appears from subsequent events [3] that these clans also disowned and withdrew their protection from the converts of their respective clans, thus throwing them beyond the pale of clan protection, to be attacked and killed by anyone. On the other hand 'Abû Ṭâlib when he saw the combination and activities of the Quraysh clans respecting the Muslims, he summoned the men of Banû Hâshim and Banû al-Muṭṭalib, fully apprised them of the situation and called upon them to defend the Prophet against the enmity and hostility of the other clans. All the members of Banû Hâshim and Banû al-Muṭṭalib, with the singular exception of 'Abû Lahab, signified their solidarilty with 'Abû Ṭâlib and undertook to defend the Prophet against all odds.[4]

While the Quraysh leaders thus openly proposed to do away with the Prophet and the men of Banû Hâshim and Banû al-Muṭṭalib equally resolved to protect him, the threat to his life continued to exist. The reports show that there were at least three other attempts made by individual opponents to kill him. One of these attempts was clearly posterior to the incident mentioned above. The other two appear to be anterior to it. It is clear, however, that though the authors of these attempts were three separate individuals, in each case the individual in question was either instigated and encouraged or engaged by the Quraysh leaders in general.

One of the two earlier attempts was made by 'Abû Jahl when the Quraysh leaders' efforts to entice the Prophet by offering him wealth and position were unsuccessful. It is reported that when the Prophet rejected their offers and left the Ka'ba compound 'Abû Jahl told the other leaders

1. Ibid., 287.
2. *Ibid.*
3. See *infra*, pp. 667-668.
4. Ibn Hisham, I, 287.

that he would no longer tolerate Muḥammad's (ﷺ) activities and his praying at the Ka'ba. 'Abû Jahl informed them of his murderous resolve that he would carry with him as heavy a block of stone as he was able to and when the Prophet came to the Ka'ba to pray and would be in prostration, he would smash his (the Prophet's) head. After that, 'Abû Jahl added, the Quraysh leaders would be free either to defend him or to surrender him to Banû Hâshim for their doing to him what they liked to do. The Quraysh leaders assured 'Abû Jahl that they would never surrender him to Banû Hâshim, so he could proceed to execute his plans. Thus encouraged and assured of support by the Quraysh leaders 'Abû Jahl indeed took a heavy stone with him on the following day and waited near the Ka'ba. The other Quraysh leaders also waited in their usual place of assemblage in the Ka'ba compound to see 'Abû Jahl's deed. The Prophet, as usual, came to the Ka'ba and engaged himself in prayer. When he went into prostration 'Abû Jahl stepped forward to strike the Prophet's head with the stone. But as he came near the Prophet, he suddenly stepped back in utter terror, his face completely bloodless and pale, his hands trembling and dropping the stone on the ground. At this unexpected sight the Quraysh leaders hastened to 'Abû Jahl and asked him what the matter was with him. He told them that as he approached the Prophet he ('Abû Jahl) saw a gigantic he-camel blocking his way and about to attack and swallow him up. "By Allah", swore Abû Jahl before the Quraysh leaders, "I have never seen such a big-shouldered, gigantic and frightful camel." Ibn Isḥâq says that the Prophet subsequently mentioned that it was the angel Jibrîl who thus frightened 'Abû Jahl away and that if he had advanced further he would have been seized and torn to pieces.[1]

The second attempt was made by 'Uqbah ibn 'Abî Mu'ayṭ. An eyewitness account [2] says that the attempt followed a couple of days' commotion and excitement among the Quraysh leaders. One day they gathered at the Ka'ba compound and started discussing about the Prophet who, according to them, had befooled their forbearance, decried their forefathers, abused their religion, caused dissension in their society and reviled their gods. They said that they had tolerated that serious affair for too long. As they were thus discussing the matter the Prophet appeared there. He went near the Ka'ba, kissed its corner (the black stone) and started circumambulating it. As he

1. Ibn Hishâm, 319-320.

2. The reporter of the account is 'Amr ibn Al-'Âṣ (ibn Wâ'il) (may Allah be pleased with him) who personally witnessed the incident.

passed by them in the first round they abused him so badly that signs of annoyance were clearly visible on his countenance. They similarly abused him as he passed by them in the second and third rounds. Consequently an altercation took place between him and them, after which he left the place. On the following day the Quraysh leaders similarly gathered at the Ka'ba compound and began to discuss about him and to abuse him. And when the Prophet came there as usual they in a body pounced upon him, surrounded him and demanded of him whether he spoke such and such about their gods. He replied in the affirmative. Thereupon one of their leaders, 'Uqbah ibn 'Abî Mu'ayṭ, jumped upon him, tied his throat with his garment and so suffocated him that he was almost at the point of death. At that moment 'Abû Bakr suddenly appeared there, forcefully pushed 'Uqbah, released the Prophet from his grasp and tearfully cried out: "Are you going to kill a man because he says: My Lord is Allah?" The reporter adds that that was the worst of what he saw the Quraysh did to the Messenger of Allah.[1]

The third attempt was made by 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (r.a.) just on the eve of his conversion to Islam. It has already been seen [2] how he went out one day with his sword in hand determined to kill the Prophet. Ibn Isḥâq mentions that the Quraysh leaders had engaged 'Umar to perpetrate the nefarious deed.[3] The attempt of course failed and in its sequel 'Umar embraced Islam.

This attempt took place in the fifth or early in the sixth year of the Prophet's mission. Though 'Umar was converted to Islam the threat to the Prophet's life continued. Indeed, for the rest of the Makkan period the one absorbing aim of the Makkan opposition was to do way with him. As will be seen presently,[4] the sole purpose of the 'boycott' of Banû Hâshim, which followed shortly and which lasted for nearly three years, was to force Banû Hâshim to withdraw their protection for the Prophet and surrender him to the Quraysh leaders, The last attempt of the Quraysh leaders to kill him was made on the eve of his migration to Madina.[5] With reference to all these attempts the Qur'ân says:

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 309-310; *Bukhârî,* no. 3856; Ibn Kathir, *Tafsîr,* IV, 77 (comment on 40:28)

2. *Supra,* pp. 532-533.

3. Ibn Isḥâq, *Al-Siyar wa al-Maghâzî,* p. 181.

4. *Infra,* Ch. XXXIII, sec, I.

5. *Infra,* pp. 868-871.

﴿ وإذ يمكر بك الذين كفروا ليثبتوك أو يقتلوك أو يخرجوك ويمكرون ويمكر الله والله خير المـٰكرين ﴾ (٨ : ٣٠)

"And (remember) when the unbelievers plotted against you, to get hold of you or to kill you or to expel you. They plot and plan; and Allah also plans, and Allah is the greatest of all planners." (8:30).

CHPTER XXVIII
THE MIGRATION TO ABYSSINIA

1. THE BACKGROUND

By the beginning of the fifth year of the mission a few things had become quite clear. In the first place, the leaders of the opposition had succeeded in forming a combination of all the Makkan clans except Banû Hâshim (with Banû al-Muṭṭalib) against the Prophet and the Muslims. Secondly, having failed to suppress the movement by sheer persecution of the poorer and weaker converts and having also failed to make the Prophet agree to a compromise the leaders had resolved upon killing him. Not only that, they had even made their resolution known and had, according to the prevailing notions of tribal justice, offered a young man as substitute for him to 'Abû Ṭâlib in an attempt to persuade him to surrender the Prophet to them. Thirdly, in the face of these developements Banû Hâshim and Banû al-Muṭṭalib stood united under 'Abû Ṭâlib's leadership to protect the Prophet, no mater whether any of them embraced Islam or not. Fourthly, it was equally clear that as against this attitude of Banû Hâshim the hostile combination did not dare engage in a direct and armed conflict with them obviously because no easy victory and quick end of the dispute were in sight. This means that Banû Hâshim with Banû al-Muṭṭalib were alone quite a match for all the other clans combined. Fifthly, and arising out of this last mentioned fact, the hostile combination had decided to check the progress of Islam and, if possible, to stamp it out by each clan's dealing more rigorously with the converts from among its members. It may be noted that previously also each clan used to punish those of its members who embraced Islam; but the new policy was distinguished by the fact that now each clan of the hostile combination withdrew its protection from its dissident members, excommunicated them and expelled them from its fold. This measure had very serious consequences for the converts, specially those who belonged to well-to-do and respectable families. For all of a sudden they found themselves rootless, without any social and personal protection and liable to be maltreated or killed with impunity by anyone. Their position became similar to that of statelessness in modern times. It became extremely difficult, or rather impossible, for them to continue to live in that state in their own society. This fact explains why it was mainly the converts of respectable and wealthy families,

and not the very poor and helpless converts, who, as will be seen presently, were the ones to migrate to abyssinia.

That this new method of opposition had been put in force about that time is evident from the facts that even a person like 'Abû Bakr (r.a.) had to obtain the protection of a non-Quraysh chief (Ibn al-Dughunnah) in order to stay at Makka[1] and that 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭab (r.a.), who embraced Islam shortly afterwards, had to seek and receive the protection of a strong man of another clan, Al-'Âṣ ibn al-Wa'il of Banû Sahm, in order to save himself from being heckled and assaulted by the Makkan populace.[2] Also, when a number of emigrants to Abyssinia returned to Makka for a short while, each of them had to obtain the protection of someone of another clan although all of them belonged to respectable families and clans.[3] Before these instances we do not hear of anyone's seeking protection with a person of another clan.

This situation provides the background to the migration Abyssinia. Ibn Isḥâq distinctly states that when the Prophet saw that while he himself was being protected by his own clan, his followers were being disowned and oppressed by their respective clans and he himself was unable to help the Muslims, he gave them a signal for migration to Abyssinia.[4] In fact he received several revelations indicating the need for the Muslims' migrating to another land for the sake of their faith. One significant revelation of the time runs as follows:

﴿يـٰعبادىَ الذين ءامنوا إن أرضى وٰسعة فإيّـٰى فاعبدون * كلّ نفس ذآئقة الموت ثم إلينا ترجعون * والذين ءامنوا وعملوا الصـٰلحـٰت لنبوئنهم من الجنة غرفا تجرى من تحتها الانهـٰر خـٰلدين فيها نعم أجر العـٰملين * الذين صبروا وعلىٰ ربهم يتوكّلون * وكأيّن من دآبّة لّا تحمل رزقها الله يرزقها وإياكم وهو السميع العليم﴾

(٢٩:٥٦-٦٠)

"O My servants who believe, verily My earth is spacious. So Me alone you do worship. Every individual is to taste death; and then to Me you shall all be brought back. Those who believe and do good deeds, I shall of surety assign them abodes in paradise, beneath which flow springs, to abide therein for ever. How excellent is the reward of those who do good deeds — those who bear with patience and put their trust in their Lord! How many are the creatures that do not carry their provisions with them! Allah feeds them and you too. He is All-Hearing and All-knowing." (29:56-60)

1. *Infra,* pp. 675-676.
2. *Supra,* p. 534.
3. *Infra,* 672-673.
4. Ibn Hishâm, I, 321.

The passage emphasizes that Muslims should under no circumstances compromise on the issue of *tawḥîd* and should continue to worship Allah alone at all costs, if necessary even by abandoning their birthplace and migrating to another land, for Allah's earth is spacious. Also they should not be afraid to risk their lives for the sake of their faith in Allah; for every individual is to die at one time or other and ultimately everyone shall be brought back to his Lord. They should not be dissuaded from following the right course by their love for hearth and home; for Allah will amply reward them in the hereafter with the choicest of hearth and home to abide therein for ever. Nor should the Muslims worry about their means of livelihood in a foreign land; for so many of the creatures of the world do not carry their provisions with them. It is Allah who provides for them as well as for men.[1]

There were other revelations too preparing the mind of the Muslims for migration. One of them is *sûrat Maryam* (XIX) which gave them an insight into the story of Prophet 'Îsâ (Jesus), peace be on him, and his mission. It stood them in good stead, as will be seen presently, when they were in Abyssinia. Another was a peiece of practical advice about how to deal with the People of the Book in general.[2] When the Prophet received such indications about the need for the Muslims to migrate to another land he told his followers about it and pointed out to them thaι there was the land of Abyssinia where a just king ruled and under whom none was wronged, adding that the Muslims could continue to live there until Allah provided a better opening for them.[3]

II. WHY ABYSSINIA?

The choice of Abyssinia was no doubt suggested by the prevailing international situation, particularly the state of relationship between the Byzantıne and the Persian Empires. These two powerful northern neighbours of Arabia had at that time been involved in a prolonged and deadly armed conflict. In 603, some seven years before the Prophet's call, the Byzantine throne was usurped by Phocus whose cruelty and ruthlesseness soon alienated all sectinos of the population from him. Taking advantage of this situation the Persain Emperor Khusraw Parwez declared war against the Byzantine ruler and, after inflicting a series of defeat upon his forces,

1. See Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr,* 21/10-11.
2. i.e., Q. 29:46.
3. Ibn Hishâm, I, 321-322.

advanced into Syria. In 614 Parwez occoupied Jerusalem. The Makkan unbelievers, who sympathized with Persia, were elated with joy at this success of Parwez. They started taunting the Muslims, by saying that as the devotees of the gods of good and evil (*Ahura Mazda* and *Ahura Man*) had defeated the Christian forces, similarly the devotees Al-Lât and Al-'Uzzâ would overcome the Muslims.[1] In this context came the revelation of the initial passage of *sûrat al-Rûm* (XXX) which runs as follows:

﴿الٓمٓ * غلبت الروم * فى أدنى الأرض و هم من بعد غلبهم سيغلبون * فى بضع سنين لله الأمر من قبل ومن بعد ويومئذ يفرح المؤمنون * بنصر الله ينصر من يشاء وهو العزيز الرحيم﴾(٣٠:١-٥)

"Alif-Lâm-Mîm. The Romans (Byzantines) have been defeated in the hither land, but they, after their defeat, will soon be victorious, in less then ten years. For decision lies with Allah, initially as well as subsequently. And on that day the Believers shall rejoice at the victory given (them) by Allah. He helps whomsoever He wills; and He is the Most Mighty, the Most Merciful"(30:1-5)

The passage graphically portrays the situation, as well between the Byzantines and the Persians as between the believers and the unbelievers at Makka. It also predicts very clearly that within less then ten years the Byzantines would turn the table upon the Persians and simultaneously the Muslims too would achieve victory by Allah's grace. The prediction came true exactly within the period speciefied; for in 624 A.C. the Byzantines, under their new ruler Heraclius, inflicted a decisive defeat upon the Persians and the same year the Muslims similarly obtained their first major victory at Badr.

For the time being, however, victory was not in sight either of the Byzantines or of the Muslims; and there was no question of the latter's seeking refuge towards the north. Hence they turned their attention to the only non-idolatrous country in the south, namely Abyssinia. It was also a land with which the Quraysh, particularly Banû Hâshim and Banû al-Muṭṭalib, had been carrying on trade for a long time.

III. THE FIRST BATCH OF EMIGRANTS

Accordingly, under the direction of the Prophet, some 15 or 16 Muslims including 4 ladies slipped away from Makka in the month of Rajab of the fifth year of the mission, corresponding to 615 A.C. The Quraysh leaders gave them a hot pursuit; but they were lucky to get a boat at the port

1. See *Musnad,* I, 276, 304; *Tirmidhî* (*Tuḥfat al-'Aḥwadhî,* pp. 51-54) nos. 3245-3246; Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr,* VI, p. 304; Shawkânî, *Tafsîr,* IV, 214.

Shu'aybah (modern Mocha) and left for Abyssinia just before their pursuers got to the spot. According to Ibn Isḥâq the following were the first group who migrated to Abyssinia.[1]

1. 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân (of Banû 'Umayyah)
2. Ruqayyah bint Râsul Allah (wife of the above, of Banû Hâshim)
3. 'Abû Ḥudhayfah ibn 'Utbah ibn Rabi'ah (of Banû 'Abd Shams ibn 'Abd Manâf)
4. Sahlâh bint Suhayl ibn 'Amr (wife of the above, of Banû 'Âmir ibn Lu'ayy)
5. Al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm (of Banû Asad ibn 'Abd al-'Uzzâ ibn Quṣayy, Khadîjah's nephew and son of the Prophet's paternal aunt)
6. Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr (of Banû 'Abd al-Dâr ibn Quṣayy)
7. 'Abd al-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf (of Banû Zuhrah ibn Kilâb)
8. 'Abû Salamah ibn 'Abd al-Asad (of Banû Makhzûm)
9. 'Umm Salamah (wife of the above, of Banû Makhzûm)
10. 'Uthmân ibn Maẓ'ûm (of Banû Jumaḥ, maternal uncle of *'Umm al-Mu'minin* Ḥafṣah)
11. 'Âmîr ibn Rabî'ah al-'Anazî (confederate of Banû 'Adiyy)
12. Laylâ bint 'Abî Ḥathmah (wife of the above, of Banû 'Adiyy)
13. 'Abû Sabrah ibn 'Abî Ruhm (of Banû 'Âmir ibn Lu'ayy)
14. Suhayl ibn Bayḍâ' (of Banû al-Ḥârith ibn Fihr)

Ibn Sa'd and Al-Ṭabarî add two more names to the list. They are:

15. Ḥâṭib ibn 'Amr ibn 'Abd Shams
16. 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ûd (confederate of Banû Zahrah)[2]

Ibn Isḥâq furher states that subsequently Ja'far ibn 'Abî Ṭâlib joined the group.[3]

The list shows that almost all the emigrants were from among important clans and families. Their number and the inclusion in the group of the wives of some of them indicate that they did not go to the land on purely or primarily diplomatic purpose; though on arrival there they remained at or near

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 322-323.
2. Ibn Sa'd, I, 204; Al-Ṭabarî, *Târikh,* II, 330 (I/1183)
3. Ibn Hishâm, I, 323.

the court of the Abyssinian ruler. This was only natural; for they went seeking refuge there. So they got in touch with the ruler's court at the earliest opportunity after their arrival in the land. According to the reports of some of the emigrants themselves, they were not only allowed to stay there peacefully but also no hindrance was placed on their belief and worship. Nor were they harassed by words or deeds.

IV.TEMPORARY RETURN OF THE EMIGRANTS

The emigrants continued to stay in Abyssinia peacefully for a couple of months. Towards the end of that period a rumour reached them that the Quraysh leaders had embraced Islam and the enmity between them and the Prophet had ceased. What caused the rumour is discussed separately below.[1] On the basis of that rumour, however, all or most of the emigrants left Abyssinia in the month of Shawwâl of that very year. According to Ibn Sa'd all the emigrants returned;[2] but Ibn Isḥâq says that some of them remained in Abyssinia.[3] When the returnees reached the vicinity of Makka they were informed, on enquiry, by a man of Banû Kinânah that the rumour was untrue.[4] After some hesitation, however, they decided to enter Makka, each after having obtained suitable protection of someone. It is stated that only 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ûd entered the city without obtaining anyone's protection and after staying there for sometime went back to Abyssinia.[5]

The list of returnees, together with the 'protector' of each, is as follows:

Names of returnees	"Protectors"
1. 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân	'Abû 'Uḥayḥah (Sa'd ibn al-'Âṣ)
2. 'Abû Ḥudhayfah ibn 'Utbah ibn Rabi'ah	'Umayyah ibn Khalaf
3. Al-Zubayr ibn Al-'Awwâm	Zam'ah ibn Al-Aswad
4. Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr	Al-Naḍr ibn al-Ḥârith ibn Khaladah (or 'Abû'Azîz ibn 'Umayr)

1. *Infra,* Chap. XXIX.
2. Ibn Sa'd, I, 206.
3. Ibn Hishâm, I, 364.
4. Ibn Sa'd, I, 206.
5. *Ibid.*

5. ‘Abd al-Raḥman ibn ‘Awf	Aswad ibn Yaghûth
6. ‘Âmir ibn Rabi‘ah	Al-‘Âṣ ibn Wa’il
7. ’Abû Sabrah ibn Abî Ruhm	Akhnas ibn Sharîq
8. Ḥâṭib ibn ‘Amr	Ḥuwayrith ibn ‘Abd al-‘Uzzâ
9. Suhayl ibn Bayḍâ’ [1]	
10. ‘Uthmân ibn Maẓ‘ûn	Al-Walîd ibn al-Mughîrah
11. ’Abû Salamah	’Abû Ṭâlib

Regarding ‘Uthmân ibn Maẓ‘ûn (no.10) it is stated that when he found that while he was living peacefully under Al-Walîd's protection and the other Muslims were being persecuted and tortured he felt ashamed of his conduct. Therefore he openly renounced Al-Walîd's protection in front of an assemblage of the Quraysh at the Ka‘ba. Thereupon a man of Al-Walîd's clan assaulted ‘Uthmân, but the assailant was dealt a blow by a supporter of ‘Uthmân.[2] The fracas did not however proceed further.

Regarding ’Abû Salamah it is stated that his own clan, Banû Makhzûm, objected to his being protected by ’Abû Ṭâlib, saying that while he had every right to give protection to his nephew (i.e. the Prophet) he had no right to extend his protection to a man of Banû Makhzûm. ’Abû Ṭâlib resolutely defended his action saying that if he could give protection to his brother's son, he could with equal justice do so with regard to his sister’s son. It may be noted that ’Abû Salamah's mother Barrah bint ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib was ’Abû Ṭalib's sister (and the Prophet's aunt). The leaders of Banû Makhzûm were bent upon making a quarrel with ’Abû Ṭalib over the matter; but at that time ’Abû Lahab intervened, and it appears for once in his life, in favour of ’Abû Ṭalib's policy of supporting the Prophet. ’Abû Lahab plainly told the Makhzumite leaders that they had gone too far in harassing the Shaykh (’Abû Ṭalib) and if they proceeded further he (’Abu Lahab) would definitely stand up in his defence. Fearing that ’Abû Lahab might at last throw in his lot fully with his clan the Makhzûmites placated him with sweet words and withdrew.[3]

1. It is reported that he remained secretively in Makka for sometime and then returned to Abyssinia.
2. Ibn Hishâm, I, 370
3. Ibn Hishâm, I, 371.

It is noteworthy the most of those who came forward as 'protectors' for the returnees were the very leaders who had been instrumental in effecting the coalition of the clans against the Muslims. What motives led them to play this sort of double role can only be guessed. Probably the opposition leaders were eager to get back amidst them their own kiths and kin but did not at the same time want to reverse the policy of each clan disowning the Muslims from among its own members. The difficulty was therefore circumvented by an individual leader's coming forward as protector for the son or relative of the leader of another clan. The assumption applies very strongly to the case of 'Utbah ibn Rabî'ah's son ('Abû Ḥudhayfah) who was 'protected' by 'Umayyah ibn Khalaf. Alternatively, the leaders probably wanted to demonstrate that their enmity was mainly against the Prophet and not against the converts as such and thus indirectly to weaken their attachment to him. The leaders might even have been actuated by an ulterior motive of getting within their grasp the returnees in order to bring pressure on them to renounce Islam. In any case, their offering protection to converts not belonging to their own clans was in contrast with their objection to 'Abû Ṭalib's offering protection to a member of another clan. However, the fact that Banû Hâshim, particularly 'Abû Ṭâlib, offered protection not only to the Prophet but also to a member of Banû Makhzûm ('Abû Salamah) shows that they were both physically and psychologically strong enough to face the opposition of the other Quraysh clans combined.

IV. THE SECOND PHASE OF MIGRATION TO ABYSSINIA

The position of the Muslims, however, did not remain tenable for any length of time. A fresh wave of persecution was launched by the unbelieving leaders upon the humbler section of converts so much so that, as noted above, persons like 'Uthmân ibn Maẓ'ûn felt guilty within themselves for having accepted the protection of unbelieving leaders. As the situation continued to deteriorate there began a second phase of migration to Abyssinia. Not that the Muslims went in a body and at a time to that land; but they went there in successive groups.

According to Ibn Sa'd a total of some 80 males and 18 females (11 Qurayshites and 7 non-Qurayshites) ultimately found shelter in Abyssinia. He further says that 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir was among the emigrants; but this is doubted by others including Ibn Isḥâq and Al-Wâqidî. Similarly with regard to 'Abû Mûsâ al-'Ash'arî there is a difference of opinion. According to

some reports he also migrated to Abyssinia; but it appears from his own statement that he, along with 52 or 55 Muslims of his tribe, started by boat from Yaman to join the Prophet; but the boat was blown away by wind to Abyssinia where he joined Ja'far ibn 'Abî Ṭâlib and the other emigrants there and then returned with them to the Prophet after the victory at Khaybar.[1] Again, with regard to 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân, his wife Ruqayyah bint Rasûl Allah, 'Abû Ḥudhayfah and his wife Sahlah bint Suhayl ibn 'Amr, it is stated by Al-Ṭabari that they stayed at Makka;[2] but this statement does not appear to be correct; for Ibn Isḥâq mentions them not only among those who migrated to Abyssinia for the second time but also in the list of the 33 males and 8 females who returned to Makka shortly before the Prophet's migration to Madina.[3]

That the situation at Makka had become really critical for the Muslims is evident also from the fact that even 'Abû Bakr, with the Prophet's permission, started for migrating to Abyssinia. When he reached Bark al-Ghimâd, a place at some " five days' distance" from Makka towards Yaman, he came across Ibn al-Dughunnah (or Ibn al-Daghina), the chief of the Qara tribe and a leader of Al-'Aḥâbîsh.[4] He enquired of 'Abû Bakr about his destination. He replied that he had been maltreated by his people who had made his life miserable and had actually expelled him, so he was migrating to another land. On hearing this Ibn al-Dughunnah expressed his surprise and remarked that a good, generous and well-mannered person like 'Abû Bakr should not have been maltreated by his people nor did it behove them to expel such an "ornament" of the society. Ibn al-Dughunnah did not leave the matter there. He persuaded 'Abû Bakr to retrace his steps and to return to Makka, undertaking to stand security for him. 'Abû Bakr did so, being accompanied by Ibn al-Dughunnah. On reaching Makka the latter publicly announced his having taken 'Abû Bakr under his 'protection' and warned everyone not to do any harm to him ('Abû Bakr). The Quraysh leaders did not dare disregard the protection given by the Al-'Aḥâbîsh leader but sti-

1. *Bukhârî,* no. 4230.

2. Al-Ṭabarî, *Târîkh,* II, 340 (I/1194)

3. Ibn Hishâm, I, 324, 379.

4. *Al-'Aḥâbîsh* was the name given to the members of an alliance of Banû al-Ḥarith ibn 'Abd Manât ibn Kinânah, Banû al-Hûn ibn Khuzâmah ibn Mudrikah and Banû al-Muṣtaliq. They were so called because they entered into the alliance at a valley near Makka called Al-'Aḥbash.

pulated that 'Abû Bakr should only pray in his own house and not recite the Qur'ân publicly, thus attracting their children and womenfolk to the new faith. Ibn Al-Dughunnah and 'Abû Bakr both accepted the condition. 'Abû Bakr, however, shortly afterwards built a mosque within the boundary of his homestead and began to pray and recite the Qur'ân therein. The Quraysh leaders objected to this action on 'Abû Bakr's part and raised the matter with the Al-'Aḥâbîsh leader. By that time, however, the situation had changed somewhat and 'Abû Bakr gave up Ibn al-Dughunnah's protection.[1]

A fairly comprehensive list of those who thus betook themselves to Abyssinia in the second phase of the migration is given by Ibn Isḥâq.[2] It is clear from the list that there was no clan and no family in Makka who were not affected more or less by the migration and whose sons, daughters, nephews, nieces, sons-in law, brothers, sisters and other near relatives had not left their homes for their conscience's sake. Even the prominent opposition leaders were very closely affected. For instance 'Abû Jahl's brother Salamah ibn Hishâm, cousin Hishâm ibn 'Abî Ḥudhayfah, cousin and uterine brother 'Ayyâsh ibn 'Abî Rabî'ah, cousin sister 'Umm Salamah, 'Abû Sufyân's daughter 'Umm Ḥabîbah, 'Utbah ibn Rabî'ah's son 'Abû Ḥudhayfah and Suhayl ibn 'Amr's brother, sons, daughters and sons-in-law were among those who migrated to Abyssinia. The other leaders also were similarly affected.

VI. THE QURAYSH DEPUTATION TO ABYSSINIA FOR GETTING EXTRADITION OF THE EMIGRANTS

Naturally the situation stirred the Quraysh leaders to their depth. Henceforth some turned more stern and hostile in their attitude to the Muslims and Islam, while some others reacted in a different way and became somewhat soft in their attitude to the new faith. All were at one, however, on the need to make their supreme effort to get the emigrants back from Abyssinia. The more hostile among the leaders, as Ibn Isḥâq specifically mentions, were actuated by the motive of persecuting the emigrants, on their return, into recanting the new faith.[3]

The efforts of the Quraysh leaders in this respect, particularly the activities of their envoys to the Abyssinian ruler are best recorded in the reports of

1. *Bukhârî*, no. 3905; Ibn Hishâm, I, 372-374.
2. *Ibid.*, 323-330.
3. *Ibid.* 333. Ibn Isḥâq's words are: (يردهم عليهم، ليفتنوهم في دينهم)

'Umm al-Mu'minîn 'Umm Salamah, 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ûd, 'Abû Mûsâ al-'Ash'arî and Ja'far ibn 'Abî Ṭâlib (r.a.), all of whom were among the emigrants and were their spokesmen at the Abyssinian court. These reports corroborate one another in all essential respects, differing only in some minor matters of detail. The summary of 'Umm Salamah's acount is as follows:

The Quraysh leaders sent two of their seasoned and experienced diplomats, 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abî Rabî'ah ('Abû Jahl's uterine brother) and 'Amr ibn Al-'Âṣ ibn Wa'îl (of Banû Sahm) to the Abyssinian ruler with a profusion of the choicest of presents for the latter and his courtiers. On their arrival the two diplomats first contacted the principal courtiers and high officials, distributed the presents intended for them and thus made them agree unanimously to support the Quraysh leaders' prayer for extradition of the emigrants. Next the Quraysh envoys met the Negus (i.e. Abyssinian ruler), gave him the presents and addressed him saying that some foolish and recalcitrant youths of their nation had fled the country and had taken shelter in his land. They had abandoned their forefathers' religion but had adopted neither the religion which the Negus and his people professed nor any other known religion of the world, but had made a religion of their own. As soon as the diplomats finished their address the courtiers all in one voice and according to previously made arrangement supported the request for extradition, adding that the fugitives' own people knew them best and that such elements should not be entertained and given shelter in the country. The Negus, however, disagreed with his courtiers and told them that those who had fled from their own country and taken shelter in his dominion should at first be given a chance to explain their position and to present their case. Accordingly they were summoned to attend the court on a fixed day. On receiving the king's summons the emigrants discussed the matter among themselves and unanimously decided to tell the ruler all about the Prophet's teachings without any reservation, whether the Negus allowed them to stay in his land or not. When the Muslims attended the court on the appointed day the Negus asked them why they had abandoned their ancestral religion and, instead of embracing any other religion had made a new religion for themselves and what it was about. On behalf of the Muslims Ja'far ibn 'Abî Ṭâlib addressed the court. He pointed out the social and moral conditions of the Arabs prior to the Prophet's advent and also gave an account of his main teachings. He also detailed the persecutions and oppressions of the Quraysh leaders upon the Muslims and ended his address by saying that those oppressed people,

instead of going to another country, had selected to take refuge in the Negus's kingdom because of their confidence that there they would not meet with any injustice. The Abyssinian ruler was impressed by Ja'far's address and asked him to recite some of what he said had been revealed by God to the Prophet. Thereupon Ja'far recited to him the first part of *sûrat Maryam* (no. 19). The Negus was so moved on hearing the recitation that tears rolled down his cheeks. Many of his courtiers were similarly moved. When the recitation was over he remarked that what he had just heard and what Jesus had brought must have had emanated from the same source. He then said that he would not surrender the immigrants to their contrymen.

'Umm Salamh adds that of the two Quraysh envoys 'Abd Allah was somewhat soft towards the Muslims but 'Amr ibn Al-'Âṣ was uncompromising in his attitude. He planned to make another attempt with the Negus and thought that if he was requested to ask the Muslims about their beliefs regarding Jesus and if he (the Negus) came to know that he would not tolerate the emigrants' existence in his land. 'Abd Allah attempted to dissuade 'Amr from doing so; but he was determined to do it. Accordingnly he approached the Negus on the following day and prayed him to ask the Muslims about their views on Jesus, adding that they had very objectionable opinions regarding him. The Muslims had already come to know about 'Amr ibn Al-'Âṣ's design.[1] Accordingnly they once again had a consultation amongst themselves and had once again decided to speak out the truth and to state frankly and fearlessly Allah's revelation and the Prophet's teachings about Jesus. When, therefore, they were required to attend the court again and when the king asked them about their belief regarding Jesus, Ja'far unhesitatingly replied that he (Jasus) was a servant of Allah, and a spirit and a word from him which He had bestowed upon the virgin Mary. On hearing this reply the Negus remarked that Jesus was indeed no more than that. The clerics at his court attempted to raise some objections to this view; but he overruled them. He next ordered the presents given by the Quraysh leaders to be returned to their envoys, dismissed the latter from his court and permitted the Muslims to stay in his country without any fear of molestation from any quarter.[2]

1. Most probably 'Abd Allah gave the Muslims an inkling of 'Amr's next move; or else they were not likely to know about it.

2. Ibn Hishâm, I, pp. 333-338.

According to the report of 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ûd the Negus, after having listened to Ja'far's speech and his recitation of the Qur'ân, believed in Islam and the Prophet and remarked that it was about the coming of the Prophet that the Bible and Jesus had prophesied. The Negus is further said to have stated that had he not been engrossed in the affairs of state he would have gone to Makka and would have waited on the Prophet. Of similar import is the report of 'Abû Mûsâ al-'Ash'arî. The report of Ja'far ibn 'Abî Ṭâlib further corroborates the reports mentioned above and adds that the Negus, after hearing both the sides, asked the Quraysh envoys whether the emigrants were their slaves and whether they owed any money to the Quraysh leaders. To both the questions the envoys replied in the negative. Thereupon the Negus told them that then they should leave the Muslims alone and should return to their country. That the Negus had believed and embraced Islam is further evident from the report which says that when the news of his death reached the Prophet he prayed for him.[1]

VII. SIGNIFICANCE AND SEQUEL

The migration to Abyssinia and its sequel had far-reaching and momentous consequences. The sincerity and determination of the young men and women who unhestitatingly left their mother-land, hearth, home and relatives and imposed exile upon themselves for the sake of their faith must have made an impression upon the unbelieving Quraysh leaders. Their failure to procure the surrender and extradition of the emigrants added a sense of defeat to their bewilderment. They must have come to realize that the breach between them and those kiths and kin of theirs over the issue of faith was complete and irreversible. If the obstinate Makkan leaders had not yet realized that their policy of persecution had started backfiring and that the very men who had thus taken a leap into the dark for the sake of their faith would not hesitate also to lay down their lives for the same cause, they (the Quraysh leaders) were to realize it before long. The Abyssinian migration was the beginning of the failure of the policy of persecution and torture upon the Muslims .

The migration to Abyssinia also clearly signifies that the Prophet and the Muslims had already started looking beyond the confines of their native city or native land. Those who went to Abyssinia were not fugitives or refugees in the usual senses of the terms. They had of course left behind them all their

1. *Bukhârî,* nos. 3877-3881.

belongings and attachments; but they had carried with them the message and the ideas that inspired them, the light that enkindled their inner and outer selves and the spirit that propelled them into the unknown. They were the very first emissaries of Islam to foreign lands. The Abyssinian migration was indeed the beginning of Islam as a world faith.

Nor was the impression of their act upon the land of the emigrants' new abode the less important. The spectacle of nearly a hundred men and women of the rich and mercantile families and clans of Makka, who were not quite unknown to the informed and intelligent sections of the Abyssinian population, leaving their homes, possessions and relations for the sake of a new faith and taking shelter in a foreign land must have aroused the interest and curiosity of the host population. The matter thus could not have come to an end just by the departure of the Quraysh envoys for Makka. Talk of the unusual refugees must have passed from mouth to mouth and the ideas and teachings they carried with them and for the sake of which they had sacrificed everything from a worldly point of view must have been transmitted from mind to mind, particularly among the thoughtfull and the religious. An upshot of this natural process was the coming of a delegation of some 20 Christian worthies to Makka on a fact-finding mission. It is on record that on coming to Makka they met the Prophet and had a detailed discussion with him on the new faith and its teachings. The Prophet explained Islam to them, recited some parts of the Qur'ân to them, as was his wont in respect of every enquirer, and called upon them to embrace Islam. They were convinced of the truth of the new faith and accepted it. It is further on record that when they left the Prophet's presence 'Abû Jahl and some of his companions intercepted them on the way and taunted them by saying that although their countrymen had sent them to find out the facts they, instead of reporting back to their people, had abandoned their ancestral religion and had embraced the new religion. The Abyssinians replied to 'Abû Jahl with all modesty, saying that they had come to find the truth, not to insist on ignorance and falsehood and that they should therefore be left alone to go their own way.[1] It is said that this incident is alluded to in Q. 28:52-53.[2]

The emigrants continued to stay in Abyssinia peacefully for a long time.

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 391-392.

2. See for instance Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr,* VI, 254. This report mentions 70 as the number of the delegation.

Some of them, numbering about forty, returned at different times to Makka before the Prophet's migration to Madina. The others stayed there for a longer period and joined the Prophet after the victory at Khaybar. Those who returned to Makka before the migration to Madina were:

1. ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Affân
2. Ruqayyah bint Rasûl Allah (wife of the above)
3. ’Abû Ḥudhayfah ibn ‘Utbah ibn Rabî‘ah
4. Sahlah bint Suhayl ibn ‘Amr (wife of the above)
5. ‘Abd Allah ibn Jaḥsh
6. ‘Utbah ibn Ghazwân
7. Al-Zubayr ibn al-’Awwâm
8. Mus‘ab ibn ‘Umayr
9. Suwaybit ibn Sa‘d ibn Ḥarmalah
10. Ṭulayb ibn ‘Umayr
11. ‘Abd al-Raḥmân ibn ‘Awf
12. Miqdâd ibn ‘Amr
13. ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ûd
14. ’Abû Salamah
15. ’Umm Salamah (wife of the above)
16. Shammâs ibn ‘Uthmân
17. Salamah ibn Hishâm
18. ‘Ayyâsh ibn ‘Abî Rabî‘ah
19. Mu’aṯṯeb ibn ‘Awf
20. ‘Uthman ibn Maẓ‘ûn
21. Al-Sa’îb ibn ‘Uthmân ibn Maẓ‘ûn (son of th above)
22. Qudâmah ibn Maẓ‘ûn (brother of no.20)
23. ‘Abd Allah ibn Maẓ‘ûn (" " ")
24. Khunays ibn Ḥudhâfah
25. Hishâm ibn Al-’Âṣ ibn Wâ’il
26. ‘Âmir ibn Rabî‘ah
27. Laylâ bint ’Abî Ḥathmah (wife of the above)

28. 'Abd Allah ibn Makhramah
29. 'Abd Allah ibn Suhayl ibn 'Amr
30. 'Abû Sabrah ibn 'Abî Ruhm
31. 'Umm Kulthûm bint Suhayl ibn 'Amr (wife of the above and sister of no. 29)
32. Sakrân ibn 'Amr
33. Sawdah bint Zam'ah
34. Sa'd ibn Khawlah
35. 'Abû 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrâḥ
36. 'Amr ibn al-Ḥârith
37. Suhayl ibn Bayḍâ'
38. 'Amr ibn 'Abî Sarḥ

Of these persons no.32 died before the Prophet's migration to Madina. Nos. 17 and 25 (Salamah ibn Hishâm and Hishâm ibn Al-'Âṣ ibn Wa'îl) were captured and detained by the unbelievers and therefore could not migrate to Madina; while no. 18, 'Ayyâsh ibn Abî Rabî'ah, started for migration to Madina but was deceived by his uterine brother 'Abû Jahl and another person named Ḥârith ibn Hishâm into returning to Makka; and no. 29, 'Abd Allah ibn Suhayl ibn 'Amr, was detained and so badly tortured by his father, Suhayl ibn 'Amr, that he outwardly recanted and came with the unbelievers in their campaign against the Muslims at Badr but in the midst of the battle changed sides, joined the Muslims and fought against the unbelievers. The rest of the male returnees migrated to Madina and took part in the Battle of Badr.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE SPURIOUS STORY OF THE "SATANIC VERSES"

1. SUMMARY OF THE STORY

It has been mentioned above that most of the first batch of emigrants to Abyssinia temporarily returned to Makka on the basis of a rumour of a compromise between the Quraysh leaders and the Prophet. About the reason for this rumour Al-Ṭabarî, Al-Wâqidî and some others reproduce a report in more than a dozen varying versions through as many chains of narrators[1] which say in effect that the Prophet, in view of the increasing enmity and opposition of the Quraysh leaders wished that it would be good if for the time being no further revelation came in denunciation of their gods and goddesses, or if some revelation came which would make the leaders soften down and cease their hostilities. In such a state of mind he one day went to the Ka'ba where he recited to a gathering of believers and unbelievers *sûrat al-Najm* (no. 53) which is said to have been revealed at that time. In the course of its recitation and when he uttered its *'âyahs* 19-20: "Do you see al-Lât and al-'Uzzâ, and the other third, Manât, ?" ﴿أفرءيتم اللـٰت والعزىٰ * ومنوٰة الثالثة الأخرىٰ﴾ Satan "threw" in the recitation the couplet: "Those are the swans exalted; verily their intercession is to be expected." (تلك الغرانقة العلى وإن شفاعتهن لترجى / لترتجى). The Prophet then completed the recitation of the *sûrah* and in accordance with the behest contained in its last *'âyah* went into prostration and those present there, believers and unbelievers, also did so except an old Quraysh leader ('Umayyah ibn Khalaf or Al-Walîd ibn al-Mughîrah or 'Abû 'Umayyah) who raised a handful of dust and touched it with his forehead, saying that that would suffice for him. The Quraysh leaders are said to have given out as reason for their prostrating themselves by saying that now that the Prophet had recognized the position of the goddesses as intercessors with Allah there was in fact no point of quarrel with him. Afterwards, in the evening (some versions do not specify any time) the angel Jibrîl came to the Prophet and asked him to recite the *sûrah* which he did, still reciting the "satanic verses". Jibrîl protested, saying that those were not what had been revealed. At this the Prophet became very sad and apprehensive of Allah's wrath. Thereupon two separate passages, 17:73-75 and 22:52 were revealed[2] in reassuring the Prophet and the "satanic verses" were repealed. The Quraysh leaders became angry and renewed their enmity and opposition

1. See Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr*, pt.XVII, pp. 186-190 where most of the versions are given.
2. Some versions of the report mention the revelation of only one passage, i.e., 22:52.

with increased vehemence. Meanwhile the news of their prostration and of the incident reached Abyssinia in the form of a rumour of their compromise with the Prophet.

The two passages said to have been revealed in reassuring the Prophet run as follows:

﴿وإن كادوا ليفتنونك عن الّذىٓ أوحينآ إليك لتفترى علينا غيره, وإذا لّا تخذوك خليلا * و لولآ أن ثبتنـٰك لقد كدت تركن إليهم شيئا قليلا * إذا لّأذقنـٰك ضعف الحيوٰة وضعف الممات ثم لا تجد لك علينا نصيرا﴾
(١٧:٧٣-٧٥)

"Indeed they were about to divert you from what We revealed to you, in order that you forge against Us something else, and in that case they would certainly have taken you as a friend. And had We not made you firm, you would almost have inclined towards them a little; and in that case we would have made you taste the double (punishment) in life and double (punishment) in death; and then you would not have found for you as against Us any helper." (17:72-75)

﴿ومآ أرسلنا من قبلك من رّسول و لا نبىّ إلآ إذا تمنّىٓ ألقى الشيطـٰن فى أمنيّته فينسخ الله ما يلقى الشيطـٰن ثمّ يحكم الله ءايـٰته والله عليم حكيم﴾(٢٢:٥٢)

"Never Did we send a Messenger nor a Prophet before you but that when he formed an intention Satan threw something in his intention; but Allah cancels what Satan throws in and then makes His signs pevail. Allah is All-knowing, All-Wise."(22:52)

Thus, according to the story, the Prophet was reassured. Meanwhile news of the incident reached Abyssinia in the form of a rumour of the Quraysh leaders' acceptance of Islam and of the cessation of their hostility towards the Muslims.

II. THE QUR'ÂNIC EVIDENCE AGAINST THE STORY

The story is so manifestly absurd and untrue that it ought to have been rejected outright as such and not recorded by the chroniclers and traditionists. But since some of them have recorded it, this very fact, rather than the obviously discrediting features of the story itself, has often been cited as ground for its genuineness. As Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn al-Râzî correctly points out, though this story has been noted by some commentators, those who have critically looked at it have all rejected it as spurious on the grounds of its conflict with the clear testimony of the Qur'ân, the rules governing the genuineness of traditions and the dictates of reason.

As regards the Qur'ânic evidence against the genuineness of the story it is of three kinds. First, there are a number of statements in the Qur'ân that show that neither Satan nor anyone else could interfere in the process of coming of the revelation, nor did the Prophet ever entertain any intention of

making a compromise with the unbelieving leaders, nor did he ever interpolate anything in the text of the revelation. Secondly, the passages cited as having been revealed as a sequel to the incident and for reassuring the Prophet prove to the contrary, showing that he had not made even the slightest move towards making a compromise with the unbelieving leaders. Thirdly, the internal evidence of *sûrat al-Najm* (no.53), in connection with the revelation of which the story has been foisted, goes against its spirit and purport.

The passages that directly belie the story are as follows:

﴿ ولو تقوّل علينا بعض الأقاويل * لأخذنا منه باليمين * ثم لقطعنا منه الوتين﴾ (٦٩:٤٤-٤٦)

(a) "If he (the Messenger) were to invent any saying in our name, We should certainly have seized him by the right hand and We should then have surely cut off the artery of his heart." (60:44-46)."[1]

﴿ ... قل ما يكون لى أن أبدّله من تلقآيِ نفسىٓ إن أتبع إلا ما يوحىٓ إلىَّ... ﴾ (١٠:١٥)

(b) "... Say: It is not for me, of my own accord, to change it (the revelation). I follow naught but what is revealed unto me." (10:15)

﴿ لا يأتيه البـٰـطل من بين يديه ولا من خلفه تنزيل من حكيم حميد ﴾ (٤١:٤٢)

(c) "No falsehood can approach it from the front, nor from the rear (i.e., neither directly nor indirectly). It is a sent-down from Allah the All-Wise, the All-Praiseworthy."(41:42)

﴿ إنا نحن نزلنا الذكر وإنا له، لحـٰـفظون ﴾ (١٥:٩)

(d) "We indeed have sent down the recital (the Qur'ân) and We indeed are its Protectors (from any interference)." (15:9)

﴿ ... كذٰلك لنثبّت به فؤادك ورتلنـٰـه ترتيلا ﴾ (٢٥:٣٢)

(e) "... In that way (We have revealed it), that We may make your heart firm thereby; and We have dictated it in stages." (25:32)

Thus the Qur'ân repeatedly says that Allah has protected it against any possibility of being tampered with directly or indirectly, that it is not for the Prophet to change it or add to it anything and that if he had done so Allah's severe punishment would inevitably and irresistibly have befallen him. These clear and positive statements directly contradict the story which says that the Prophet of his own accord or being deceived by Satan introducted something into the text of revelation. Not only that. The alleged interpolation violated the fundamental teaching of the Qur'ân, i.e., monothiesm

1. See also *supra*, pp. 436-439.

(*tawḥîd*) and thus constituted the offence of *shirk* which Allah warns elsewhere in the Qur'ân He shall under no circumstances forgive. The story is thus quite contrary to the specific statements of the Qur'ân and also to the tenor and purport of its entire text. As such the story is totally unworthy of any credence. This is not simply from a Muslim's point of view, but also from a true historian's point of view. For, to any impartial historian, the Qur'ân is the primary and the most contemporary source of information on the Prophet's life and teachings. Hence any information or statement in any other source, including the reports (tradition), that come in conflict with the primary source must not be allowed to override or supersede it.

Secondly, as regards the two passages, 17:73-74 and 22:52, that are said by the protagonists of the story to have been revealed as a sequel to the alleged incident and in reproving or consoling the Prophet, a little careful look at them would at once show that their texts, far from supporting the story, do in fact contradict it. The first passage shows that it was the unbelievers who attempted to induce the Prophet to making a compromise with them, not that he ever wanted it. The passage further states that Allah made the Prophet's heart firm against such attempts of the unbelievers and that had He not done so the Prophet would probably have been inclined towards the unbelievers' proposals a little. The emphasis here is not on the Prophet's supposed inclination towards making a compromise but on the intensity of the unbelievers' attempts on the one hand and, on the other, on Allah's special favour upon him in making him immune against such efforts. This is further emphasized by the unmistakable statement that because of such special favour on him the Prophet had not inclined towards the unbelievers even a little. The passage concludes by pointing out that had the Prophet deviated even a little, Allah would have made him taste double the punishment for such offence in this life as also in the life in the hereafter. The passage thus contradicts the story in all its essential aspects. (a) The passage says that it was the unbelievers who made attempts at inducing the Prophet to making a compromise. The story says that the Prophet , in view of the unbelievers' opposition, was eager for a compromise. (b) The passage says that Allah made the Prophet immune against such endeavours of the unbelievers so that he did not incline towards them even a little. The story would have us believe that the Prophet not only leaned towards them a little but even made a compromise with them by sacrificing and violating the very fundamental teaching of the Qur'ân as a whole. (c) The passage says that had the Prophet

been guilty of slight inclination towards the unbelievers' proposals he would have been doubly punished by Allah. The story says that the Prophet, though he committed the offence not only of slight inclination but of making a full compromise with the unbelievers, Allah nonetheless took kindly to him, silently repealed the unjustified interpolation in the text of the revelation and affectionately consoled him for his supposed repentance for his alleged pitfall. This is also in conflict, as pointed out above, with the other statements in the Qur'ân that Allah would inevitably and irresistibly have punished the Prophet if he had of his own accord added to or detracted anything from the text of the revelation.

The last statement of the passage 17:73-74 comes in conflict also with the interpretation given by the protagonists of the story to the other passage, 22:52, which they cite in support of the story. They do so by interpreting the expression *tamannâ* in this passage as "he reads or recites" and then by saying that never did a Prophet before Muḥammad (ﷺ) recite Allah's revelation except that Satan managed to "throw" something of his own ideas or words in it. The interpretation is so preposterous and revoltingly subversive of the concept of divine revelation as such that it ought never to have been suggested. The incorrectness and irrationality of putting this meaning on the term here will be shown presently. It may only be pointed out here that those who put that interpretation on the passage clearly fail to see that their interpretation glaringly contradicts the concluding statement of passage 17:73-74 as also the other statements of the Qur'ân where Allah unmistakably and uncompromisingly threatens severe punishment for the offence of tampering with His revelation even in the slightest degree. Strangely enough, these protagonists of the story not simply fail to see this contradiction. They, in their eagerness to show Allah's special affection for Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) even after his alleged pitfall, do not hesitate to affix the blame of similar pitfall on the part of all previous Messengers and Prophets!

It is, however, not on this ground alone that the interpretation of *tamannâ* here as "he reads or recites" should be adjudged wrong. Those who put this peculiar interpretation generally cite a couplet attributed to Ḥassân ibn Thâbit wherein the expression is said to bear the meaning of "reading". It is further said that the expression "then He confirms His *'âyahs* (or makes His *'âyâhs* prevail)" indicates that the allusion is here to the "reading" of the *'âyâhs*. But neither the one nor the other argument is decisive. Poems like

those of Ḥassân that are found in abundance in the works of chroniclers are not really contemporary materials but are mostly made to measure by others on the orders of authors and by them inserted in their works as compositions of contemporary poets. Also the expression "then he confirms etc." may more appropriately be taken to mean that Allah makes His "signs", i.e. words prevail.

The best guide to the meaning of the expression *tamannâ* in 22:52 is the natural meaning of the same expression or words derived from the same root as used elsewhere is the Qur'ân. There are at least 14 other places where they occur in the Qur'ân. Beginning with the very expression occuring in *sûrat al-Najm* itself, the other instances of the use of the term in the Qur'ân are as follows:

(1) ﴿ أم للإنسـن ما تمنّىٰ ﴾ (٥٣ : ٢٤)

"Or shall man have just what he fancies?" (53:24)

(2) ﴿ ولأُضلّنهم و لأُمنّينّهم . . . ﴾ (٤ :١١٩)

"(Satan states) I shall certainly mislead them and shall raise (false) hopes in them" (4:119)

(3) ﴿ يعدهم ويُمنّيهم وما يعدهم الشّيطـن إلا غرورا ﴾ (٤ : ١٢٠)

"He makes them promises and creates (false) hopes in them; but what Satan promises is naught but deception." (4:120)

(4) ﴿ ليس بأمانيّكم ولآ أمانّى أهل الكتـب . . . ﴾ (٤ : ١٢٤)

" Not your desires, nor those of the People of the Book (would) do..." (4:123)

(5) ﴿ و أصبح الذين تمنّوا مكانه بالأمس يقولون . . . ﴾

"And those who had coveted his position the previous day started saying..." (28:82)

(6) ﴿ و لقد كنتم تمنّون الموت من قبل . . . ﴾

"And you had wished for death before..." (3:143)

(7) ﴿ ولا تتمنّوا ما فضل الله به بعضكم على بعض . . . ﴾

"And do not covet what Allah favoured some of you with over the others..." (4:32)

(8 & 9) ﴿ . . .فتمنّوا الموت إن كنتم صـدقين . . . ﴾

"...Then wish for death if you are truthful..." (2:94 & 62:6)

(10) ﴿ و لا يتمنّونه, أبدا . . . ﴾

"...But never do they desire it..." (62:7)

(11) ﴿ ولن يتمنّوه أبدا . . . ﴾

"...But never will they wish for it..." (2:95)

(12) ﴿وقالوا لن يدخل الجنّة إلا من كان هودا أو نصـرىٰ تلك أمانيّـهم...﴾

"And they say: None shall enter paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian. Those are their fancies..."(2:111)

(13) ﴿... وارتبتم وغرّتكم الأمانىّ...﴾

"...You doubted; and the fancies deceived you..." (57:14)

(14) ﴿ومنهم أميّـون لا يعلمون الكتـٰب إلا أمانىّ وإن هم إلّا يظنّون﴾

"And among them are *'ummies* who do not know the book except whims; they do naught but conjecture."(2:78)

In all these instances the expressions *tamannâ, 'umniyyah,* etc. are used in the sense of wish, desire, whim, fancy, intention, etc. In none of these places would the meaning of reading or reciting fit in with the text. Some commentators of course think that in the last mentioned instance (no.14) the word *'amâniyya* may mean reading or reciting; but that assumption is not sustained by the *'ayah* itself; for its concluding clause: "and they do naught but conjecture" which immediately follows the expression, explains and elaborates it. In view of these uniform meanings of the expression everywhere in the Qur'ân it would be wrong to put the meaning of reading or reciting on the term *tamannâ* occurring in 22:52.

This is not to say that the same word may not be used in different senses at different places. What is peculiar in the present instance is that the expression under notice bears uniform senses in all the other places where it is used in the Qur'ân. And so far as its use in 22:52 is concerned, the same is its natural meaning. To put the sense of reading or reciting on the expression here would, as already indicated, be a gross affront to both history and theology; for it would then mean that there was no previous Prophet or Messenger of Allah who was not misled by Satan to utter in the name of Allah what He actually did not reveal. Neither does the history of previous Prophets bear such a highly generalized assertion, nor is it conceivable that Allah's revelations were sent down in such unprotected and vulnerable manners that Satan had in respect of every Prophet the chance of interfering with them. That interpretation would be in conflict with the very concept of revelation (*waḥy*) as enunciated in the Qur'ân which unequivocally states that Allah Himself protects His revelation from being interfered with directly or indirectly when it is being sent down. It is neither necessary nor justifiable to tarnish the records of all the previous Prophets and to undermine the very

nature of Allah's revelation simply to justify a manifestly untrue story and a supposed pitfall on the part of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ). The plain implication of the *'ayâh* under discussion is what is an acknowledged fact of history. It is well known that in every age and place, whenever God's man, under his commission, planned to do good to mankind and embarked upon disseminating His message, Satan and his comrades intervened and attempted to obstruct, divert or frustrate the plan; but the truth and God's plan always prevailed. This universal fact of history and theology is only emphasized in the *'ayâh* under reference.[1]

That this is the natural and only meaning of the *'ayâh* is clear also from its context. The whole passage from *'âyah* 49 to 52 of the *sûrah* reads as folloswس: "Say (O Prophet): O men, I am for you a clear warner. Hence those of you who believe and do good deeds, for them is forgiveness and a generous sustenance. But those who strive against Our signs to frustrate them, they will be companions of the fire. Never did We send a messenger or Prophet before you but that whenever he intended (to disseminate the message), Satan threw (his efforts) in his (the Prophet's or Messenger's) intention. But Allah obliterates what Satan exerts and then He makes His signs prevail. Verily Allah is All-knowing, All-Wise." The whole discussion here is on the Prophet's role as warner, the devil's role as opponent of the truth and the ultimate success of the truth. It is specially noteworthy that *'ayâh* 51, which immediately precedes the statement under discussion, declares the inevitable failure and perdition for the forces of evil; while the concluding part of *'ayâh* 52 emphasizes that Allah is All-Aware and All-Wise, i.e., He is so about the plans and efforts of Satan and his followers too. It would thus be

1. See 'Abû Ḥayyân (Muḥammad ibn Yûsuf) al-Andalusî, *Tafsîr al-Baḥr al-Muḥîṭ* Vol. VI, second impression, Dâr al-Fikr, Beirut,1398/1987, pp. 381-382. He writes as follows:

(لما ذكر تعالى أنه يدفع عن الذين آمنوا، وأنه تعالى أذن للمؤمنين في القتال، وأنهم كانوا أخرجوا من ديارهم، وذكر مسألة رسوله ﷺ بتكذيب من تقدم من الأمم لأنبيائهم، وما آل إليه أمرهم من الإهلاك إثر التكذيب وبعد الإمهال، وأمره أن ينادي الناس ويخبرهم أنه نذير لهم بعد أن استعجلوا بالعذاب، وأنه ليس له تقديم العذاب ولا تأخيره، ذكر له تعالى مسألة ثانية باعتبار من مضى من الرسل والأنبياء، وهو أنهم كانوا حريصين على إيمان قومهم، مطمئنين بذلك مثابرين عليه، وأنه ما منهم أحد إلا وكان الشيطان يراغمه بتزيين الكفر لقومه، وبث ذلك إليهم، وإلقائه في نفوسهم، كما أنه ﷺ كان من أحرص الناس على هدى قومه، وكان فيهم شياطين كالنضر بن الحرث يلقون لقومه وللوافدين عليه شبها يثبطون بها من الإسلام، ولذلك جاء قبل هذه الآية [والذين سعوا في آياتنا معاجزين] وسعيهم بإلقاء الشبه في قلوب من استمالوه، ونسب ذلك إلى الشيطان لأنه هو المغوي والمحرك شياطين الإنس للإغواء، كما قال [لأغوينهم]. وقيل: إن الشيطان هنا جنس يراد به شياطين الإنس، والضمير في أمنيته عائد على الشيطان أي في أمنيَة نفسه أي بسبب أمنية نفسه، ومفعول ألقى محذوف لفهم المعنى وهو الشر والكفر، ومخالفة ذلك الرسول أو النبيَ أن الشيطان ليس يلقي الخير. ومعنى [فينسخ الله ما يلقي الشيطان] أي يزيل تلك الشبه شيئا فشيئا حتى يسلم الناس كما قال تعالى: [ورأيت الناس يدخلون في دين الله أفواجا]. [ويحكم الله آياته] أي معجزاته يظهرها محكمة لادنس فيها ليجعل ما يلقي الشيطان من تلك الشبه وزخارف القول فتنة لمريض القلب ولقاسيه وليعلم من أوتي العلم أن ما تمنى الرسول والنبي من هداية قومه وإيمانهم هو الحق وهذه الآية ليس فيها إسناد شيء إلى الرسول ﷺ إنما تضمنت حالة من كان قبله من الرسل والأنبياء إذا تمنوا...)

quite contrary to the spirit and context of the passage as a whole to suggest that in spite of Allah's being All-Aware and All-Wise, Satan nevertheless succeeds in interfering with His revelations to His Prophets and Messengers! To interpret *tamannâ* in the passage as reading or reciting would be tantamount to such an absurd proposition.

Those who put the meaning of reading or recitation on the expression *tamannâ* do in fact approach the *'âyah* 22:52 either with a prejudice or with a preconception. Some assume that the story of the "satanic verses" is a fact without examining its merits and then, on the basis of this assumption, seek its support by putting the meaning of reading or recitation on the expression *tamannâ* in 22:52; and finally they cite this very *'âyah* as evidence of the genuineness of the story. This is clearly arguing in a circle and founding one hypothesis upon another. On the other hand there are some others who have their attention fixed primarily on the subject of *naskh* (abrogation or repeal) and approach the *'âyah* from that point of view. They bring in the story of the "satanic verses" not so much to examine its merits as really to illustrate the subject of *naskh;* and to relate the story to *'âyah* 22:52 they put the meaning of reading or recitation on *tamannâ* occurring in it, caring little to see the implications and consequences of such a forced interpretation of the expression. The technicalities of the subject of *naskh* need not be discussed here; but it would suffice to point out that it is not at all necessary to have recourse to the story of the "satanic verses" nor to twist the meaning of *tamannâ* in order to explain or illustrate the subject of *naskh.*

Last but not least, those who relate the two Qur'ânic passages, 17:73-75 and 22:52, to the story overlook the chronology of the events, particularly the dates of revelation of the two passages.[1] It is an established fact that the migration to Abyssinia took place in the month of Rajab of the fifth year of the mission and the temporary return of the emigrants took place in Shawwâl of that very year. If the story is to be connected with this latter event, then the incident narrated in the story must have taken place before the month of Shawwâl, i.e. in Ramaḍân of that year. Now *sûrat al-'Isrâ'* and *sûrat al-Ḥajj* in which respectively the two passages occur, were revealed long afterwards

1. This point has been raised by some classical scholars as well as by at least two modern scholars. See Muḥammad Ali, *Holy Qur'ân* (Translation and Commentary) first ed. 1917, footnote 1701, p.658; M. Akram Khân, *Mustafâ Charit* (Bengali text), 1st print 1936), reprinted Dhaka, 1975, pp. 389-390; Abû al-'A'lâ Maudûdî, *Sîrat-i-Sarwar-i-'Âlam,* II, Lahore, 1978., pp. 574-575.

— the first on the occasion of *'isrâ'* and *mi'râj* which, according to the most reliable accounts, took place in the 11th or 12th year of the mission; and *sûrat al-Ḥajj,* as its internal evidence shows, was revealed at Madina, most probably in the first year of *hijrah.* This would mean that the alleged disapproval of the Prophet's alleged act was made some five years after its commission; while the notice of repeal of the alleged interpolation and a sort of consolation for him were given still two years subsequently. No rational being could accept such an absurd explanation. Alternatively, if it is assumed that the passages in question were each revealed separately from the rest of the two *surahs* and not very long after the incident, then also there remain several questions to be answered: (a) Why were they not incorporated in *sûrat al-Najm* or any other *sûrah* or *sûrahs* that were revealed immediately afterwards and prior to the revelation of *sûrat al-'Isrâ'* and *sûrat al-Ḥajj*? (b) How were they kept separately for so long a time without being incorporated in any other *sûrah* or *sûrahs* and (c) what were the reasons and occasions for their incorporation in *sûrat al-'Isrâ'* and *sûrat al-Ḥajj*? The fact is that the story-tellers have forcibly and unnaturally attempted to fit these passages in the story and that the true meaning and purport of the passages do not bear out the story.

Thirdly, the internal evidence of *sûrat al-Najm,* in connection with the revelation of which the incident is said to have taken place, belies the story. It is noteworthy that the *sûrah* starts by emphasizing that the Prophet did not err or mistake and then states unequivocally in its *'âyah* 3-4: "He does not speak out of his desire. It is naught but *waḥy* (revelation) communicated (*yûḥâ*) to him." Now, it is simply unthinkable that after announcing at the very beginning of the *sûrah* that the Prophet has not gone astray, nor erred, nor does he speak out of his own wish and whim, but that what he gives out is only "revelation" communicated to him, he would immediately and in the process of receiving the same revelation set at naught this unequivocal declaration by introducing into it something extraneous and contradictory to it! Nothing could be a stronger proof of the baselessness of the allegation made in the story than these clear statements at the beginning of the *sûrah.*

Again, some versions of the story say that the alleged "satanic verses" were inserted after the 20th *'âyah* of the *sûrah* and that subsequently these were simply dropped. Other versions suggest, though not clearly state, that the "satanic verses" were replaced by the existing *'âyas* 21-23. All the versions agree in stating that the Prophet recited the whole *sûrah* on the occa-

sion and prostrated himself at the end of it. Indeed the last *'âyah* of the *sûrah* is a command to prostrate. Now, we may consider the *sûrah* in two ways, i.e., by simply inserting the alleged "satanic verses" after the 20th *'âyah* but keeping the existing *'âyahs* 21:23 in their place; or by replacing these latter with the "satanic verses". In either case there will remain incongruities and difficulties showing the absurdity of the story. Thus, if we simply insert the "satanic verses" without taking out the *'âyahs* 21-23, the passage will make an absurd and inconsistent statement and will read as follows: "Do you see Al-Lât and Al-'Uzzâ, and the other third, Manât? Those are swans exalted, whose intercession is to be expected. That then is a very unfair division. These are nothing but names that you have devised — you and your fathers — Allah has sent down no authority for it...." etc. The passage in this form would contain appreciation as well as strong denunciation of the goddesses at the same time and the inconsistency and absurdity would be conspicuous.

On the other hand, if the "satanic verses" are left as they are and the *'âyahs* 21-23 are taken out, then also there would remain an equally strong denunciation of the goddesses and of the principle of intercession in the *'âyahs* both preceding and following the "satanic verses". To begin with, *'âyahs* 20, "And Manât, the other third?" is clearly a derogatory expression, for the adjective, *al-'ukhrâ,* (the other) is used contemptuously and derisively.[1] It would then be simply incongruous to state, after that humiliating description of the goddess, that she is a highly placed and interceding deity. But leaving aside these *'âyahs,* if we proceed with the 24th *'âyah* onwards we come across a number of other and uncompromising denunciation of the unbelievers' notion of intercession. Thus, first, the very 24th *'âyah* denies the efficacy of intercession in the form of an interrogation: "Is it for man to have what he wishes (for him)?" ﴿أم للإنسـن ما تمنّى﴾ i.e., it is a vain wish that intercession will be of any avail to him.[2] The *'âyah* is only an emphasis on what has been stated in the previous *'âyahs* about the inefficacy of the goddesses. Similarly *'âyah* 25 is a follow-on and reminder that "To Allah belongs the end as also the beginning (of every matter)", i.e, man should look to Him Alone in all affairs and should not expect any kind of help or assistance from any other deity or entity. The same theme is continued and elucidated in *'âyah* 26 which faslifies, on the one hand, the erroneous notion

1. See for instance Al-Bayḍâwî, *Tafsîr,* II, 440.
2. *Ibid.*

of the unbelievers that angels were Allah's daughters and that the above mentioned goddesses were some forms of representations of those angels.[1] On the other hand it stresses that even those angels have no power to intercede except by Allah's leave. Again, far from betraying an attitude of compromise, the unbelieving leaders' attitude is denounced in *'âyah* 29 and the Messenger of Allah is clearly instructed to shun and avoid them: "Therefore, shun those who turn away from Our revelation and desire for nothing but the life of this world" ﴿ فأعرض عن من تولّىٰ عن ذكرنا و لم يرد إلا الحيوٰة الدنيا ﴾. The theme is continued in the succeeding *'âyahs* and *'âyah* 31 again emphasizes the principle of individual responsibility. Finally, in *'âyahs* 33-40 a very pointed allusion is made to the conduct of one of the unbelieving leaders, and many commentators take him to be Al-Walîd ibn al-Mughîrah,[2] saying: "Do you see the one who turns back and gives little and holds back" etc., and ends with once again disapproving the notion of intercession and emphasizing the principle of individual responsibility thus: "That no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another; that man can have nothing but what he strives for; and that his acts will soon be looked into;" etc.[3]

Thus the whole text from *'âyahs* 19 to 42, indeed to the end of the *sûrah,* has a unity and continuity in both theme and sequence. There is no giving in on the question of the futility of intercession by anyone; no relaxation on the principle of individual and personal responsibility, no softening down of denunciation of the conduct of the unbelieving leaders and no accommotiveness shown to their idiosyncracies and attitudes. The interpolation of the "satanic verses" immediately after *'âyah* 20, and the elimination of the *'âyahs* 21-23 instead, though it will only disturb the sequence and be incongruous, will not destroy the force of the main theme. No reasonable person, after a careful perusal of the *sûrah* as a whole, can assume that any of the unbelieving Quraysh leaders, who were after all no idiots, would, after listening to the end of the *sûrah,* have an impression that the Prophet had accommodated their views and that therefore there remained no material point of disagreement between him and them. Whatever might have been the source and purpose of the story, the internal evidence of the *sûrah* simply refuses to accept it. Any careful reader of the *sûrah* can see that the story has

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.,* 442.
3. Q. 53:33-40.

been unnaturally grafted on it.

III. THE REPORTS FAIL THE TESTS OF GENUINENESS

The threefold Qur'ânic evidence against the story is decisive. Apart from that, however, a little careful examination of the reports would at once expose the speciousness of the story. The story has come down in about a dozen varying versions, each version having again a couple or more of different chains of narrators (*isnâd*). These *isnâds* have been critically examined by a number of both classical and modern experts[1] and all agree in holding that each version is technically *mursal*, i.e., its *isnâd* does not go up beyond the second generation (*tâbi'ûn*) after the Prophet. Only one of these versions coming through Sa'îd ibn Jubayr is traced back to 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbas.[2] But, as Qâḍî 'Ayâḍ points put, the main narrator in this version, Shu'ba, explicity points out that he only supposes that the report comes from Ibn 'Abbâs.[3] It may be added in this connection that even Ibn 'Abbâs could not have been an eye-witness to the alleged incident; for he was born only three years before the *hijrah,* i.e., some five years after the alleged incident. Another narrator in this version is Ibn al-Kalbî who is acknowledgedly an unreliable reporter. Similarly in another form one of the narrators is Al-Muṭṭalib ibn 'Abd Allâh who is equally unreliable.[4] Even Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalânî, who is otherwise inclined to attach some importance to the fact of the report's having been transmitted through a number of channels, appears to regard this version too as *mursal.*[5] Thus the story came into existence and got currency during the time of the second generation after the Prophet. None of the reporters is contemporary with him, not to speak of being an eye-witness of the incident. If anyone of them had heard it from any of the Companions, there is no reason why he should not have mentioned it. Apart from the report being *mursal,* all the versions suffer from having in their *isnâds* persons who are considered weak *(ḍa'îf)*, or unreliable (not *thiqah*) or unknown (*majhûl*). There are also breaks in the chains of narrators of several

1. A good survey of the *isnâds* of all the versions is Nâsir al-Dîn al-Albânî, *Naṣb al-Majanîq li Nasf Qiṣṣat al-Gharânîq,* Damascus, 1952, pp. 4-18. A more recent treatment is 'Alî ibn Ḥasan ibn 'Alî ibn 'Abd al-Ḥamîd, *Dalâ'il al-Taḥqîq li'ibṭâl qiṣṣat al-Gharânîq,* Jeddah, 1412/1992.

2. See Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr,* 17/120.

3. Qâḍî 'Ayâḍ, *Al-Shifâ',* II, 118. Also cited in Al-Albânî, *op.cit.,* pp. 5-6.

4. Al Dhahabî, *Mîzân etc.,* II, 482.

5. See Al-Albânî, *op.cit.,* 5-6.

of the versions.[1]

As regards the text of the report, each version differs from the other in essential and material respects. Leaving aside differences in matters of detail, there are grave differences and disagreements in all the four essential respects, namely, (a) the occasion of the incident, (b) nature of the Prohet's alleged act, (c) the wording of the alleged "satanic verses" and (d) their effect or sequel.

Thus, with regard to the occasion of the incident, some versions of the report say that the Prophet was praying at the Ka'ba along with a number of his companions and in the presence of many unbelievers and their leaders and the *sûrat al-Najm* was revealed in the course of prayer. Other versions say that he was talking to the unbelievers gathered at the Ka'ba compound when the *sûrah* was revealed; while some other versions say that the *sûrah* had already been revealed and that the unbelieving leaders, having heard that there was the mention of their goddesses in the *sûrah*, grew inquisitive about it and came to the Prophet to hear it. He then recited it before them and in the course of it uttered the "satanic verses". Still other versions say that the unbelieving leaders, seeing that the Prophet was always surrounded by poor and unimportant converts, told him that if he made some concessions regarding the goddesses, the leaders of the community would sit with him and that thereby the visitors from outside who used to come to him to enquire about his mission would be impressed and would take him seriously. Therefore the Prophet recited the *sûrah* to the unbelieving leaders and uttered the "satanic verses" after its 19th *'âyah.*

As regards the nature of the alleged uttering of the "satanic verses", some versions of the report say that Satan threw the alleged verses in the course of the revelation of the *sûrah* and the Prophet took them to have been brought by Jibrîl. Other versions say that the Prophet uttered them in consequence of his wish to have some such revelation delivered to him as would soften the unbelieving leaders' attitude towards him; while other versions would have us believe that he uttered them by mistake. Still other versions say that he uttered them intentionally but with notes of interrogation signifying denial. Again, there are some versions which simply say that the Prophet uttered them , without giving any reason or mentioning the influence of Satan. More

5. *Ibid.,* 6-18 concludes thus:

(تلك هي روايات القصة، وهي كلها كما رأيت معلة بالإرسال والضعف والجهالة، فليس فيها ما يصلح للاحتجاج به.)

significantly, some other versions say that it was not the Prophet, but Satan himself who, imitating the latter's voice, uttered the verses and the audience mistook them to have been recited by the Prophet. Yet other versions state that it was neither the Prophet, nor Satan, but someone from among the unbelievers who uttered the alleged verses when the Prophet had just completed the recitation of *'âyah* 19 of the *sûrah.*

More importantly, the wording of the allegedly interpolated verses differs in each version from that in the other. As Maudûdî points out,[1] an analysis of the various versions yields as many as 15 different texts with notable differences in the wordings.

Finally, with regard to the immediate effect of or reaction to the alleged utterance of the verses, most of the versions say that the unbelievers were pleased and prostrated themselves along with the Prophet at the end of his recitation of the *sûrah;* but some mention Al-Walîd ibn al-Mughîrah's or 'Abû Uḥayḥah's not having gone into prostration but having only raised a handful of dust (or stones) and touched them with his forehead. Other versions, however, do not refer at all to this otherwise noticeable performance on the part of those leaders. Significantly, as regards the Muslims' reaction, some versions say that they, in consonance with their habit of following the Prophet, all prostrated themselves along with him. Still other reports say, more significantly, that while the unbelievers heard the alleged "satanic verses", the believers did not at all hear them. Again, all the versions unanimously show that no objection or uneasiness was expressed by any of the believers at the Prophet's alleged utterance of the verses, nor to his alleged dropping of them subsequently.

This negative aspect of the internal evidence of the reports deserves further emphasis. For, if such an unusual incident as the giving out of some compromising verses and their subsequent withdrawal had at all taken place, it would have been narrated by some of the Prophet's many companions. And judging from the account of the subsequent incidents of *'isrâ'* and *mi'râj,* which occasioned serious misgivings in some of the believers, it is unlikely that an incident like that of interpolation and subsequent withdrawal of the alleged "satanic verses" would have passed off without any voice of protest or uneasiness having been expressed by any of the Muslims.

To sum up, the differences and divergences in the reports about the occa-

1. Maudûdî, *op.cit.,* II, 572.

sion of the incident, the nature of the Prophet's alleged act, the wording of the alleged verses and their sequel and effect are only illustrative of the fact that none of them is a correct report of what actually transpired. These differences also show that the narrators have added their own notions and imagination to the story in the course of its transmission. The report is not given, it may once again be emphasized, by any eye-witness of the alleged incident, nor by any companion of the Prophet. It originated with the second generation (*tâbi'ûn*) after the Prophet. Besides this *mursal* nature of the reports, their *isnâd* or chains of narrators are not at all unimpeachable. On the other hand, in most cases, the *isnâd* is positively "weak" or "unreliable" or "disconnected". The fact of the multiplicity of channels (*ṭuruq*) which is sometimes considered a strengthening factor, has also been examined by experts in this connection; and it has been held that this strengthening factor does not apply in the present instance in view of the inherent weaknesses of the *isnâds* of the various channels.[1] All these factors mark the story out to be only a later fabrication. This is in addition to its glaring conflicts with the Qur'ânic evidence which, as pointed out above, is alone sufficient to discredit the story.

IV. THE ORIGIN AND CURRENCY OF THE STORY EXPLAINED

The discrepancies and differences in the various versions of the story suggest that it has been made up by the use of a good deal of imagination and fiction round a core of facts. The last *'âyah* of *sûrat al-Najm* is a command to prostate for Allah; and it is a fact that the Prophet, when he recited the *sûrah* up to its end, prostrated himself and those with him also did so. This is attested by two eyewitnesss, 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ûd and 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib ibn 'Abî Wadâ'ah. The former states that *sûrat al-Najm* was the first *sûrah* which the Prophet recited in front of a gathering of believers and unbelievers at the Ka'ba compound and that when he finished it and went into prostration all present, believers and unbelievers, also prostrated themselves. Ibn Mas'ûd further says that he noticed 'Umayyah ibn Khalaf's not going into prostration but raising a handful of dust up to his forehead.[2] Ibn Mas'ûd's information is confirmed by 'Ikrimah who, though not an eye-witness, narrates the same story through Ibn 'Abbâs.[3] The other eye-witness,

1. Al-Albânî, *op.cit.*, 6-9.
2. *Ṣaḥîḥ ibn Khuzaymah* (ed. M. A'ẓamî), no. 553, p. 278.
3. *Bukhârî*, nos. 1071, 4826.

'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, gives a similar account and adds that he himself did not join the others in prostrating. He was not a Muslim at the time and says that he made amends for that omission of his by having subsequently never failed to prostrate himself whenever he recited the *sûrah*.

What is specially noteworthy in these reports is that they do not make the slightest allusion to the Prophet's having ever been eager for making a compromise with the unbelievers nor to his having allegedly interpolated the "satanic verses" in the course of his recitation of the *sûrah*. They do, however, speak of the prostration of the unbelievers on the occasion. This raises the question: Why should they have prostrated themselves if no compromise was made with them?

To explain the unbelievers' action it is not absolutely necessary, however, to assume that the Prophet made a compromise with them. The explanation lies in the circumstances of the time. It is an acknowledged fact that the Prophet and the Muslims could not publicly and in a body perform prayer or recite the Qur'ân at the Ka'ba before 'Umar's (r.a.) conversion, which took place, according to most of the accounts, after the migration of the first batch of Muslims to Abyssinia. Some of the reports of course indicate that his conversion took place in the sixth year of the mission; but in view of the statements in other reports suggesting an earlier date and also in view of the fact that the temporary return of the emigrants in Shawwal of the 5th year took place as a sequel to the incident of the unbelievers' prostration and the rumour arising out of it, we may safely assume that 'Umar's conversion took place shortly after the migration to Abyssinia, most probably in the month of Sha'ban or Ramaḍân of that year. His conversion was a great gain to Islam. Conversely it occasioned a corresponding disappointment among the unbelieving leaders, the more so as it came in the wake of a group of their kinsmen's having left them and migrated to a foreign country. The Quraysh leaders must have also apprehended that the migration of the Muslims to Abyssinia would have an adverse effect on their (the Quraysh leaders') trade with that country. All these circumistances made them eager for making a compromise with the Prophet and for creating such a situation as would induce the emigrants to return to Makka. It is noteworthy that both the Qur'anic evidence and the reports show that it was the Quraysh leaders and not the Prophet, who were eager for making a compromise and took the ini-

tiatives in this regard. It was at such a stage of the Quraysh leaders' mentality that the Prophet and the Muslims, encouraged by 'Umar's conversion, went to the Ka'ba compound and there recited *sûrat al-Najm* either in the course of prayer or independently of it.

A second fact which needs emphasizing in this connection is that the text of the so-called "satanic verses" was no new composition made on the occasion mentioned. It was an old couplet which the Quraysh pagans used to recite in praise of their goddesses while circumambulating the Ka'ba.[1] It is also to be remembered that the unbelievers used to create noise and disturbances whenever the Prophet or the Muslims recited the Qur'ân publicly. Therefore it is very likely that when the Prophet recited the *sûrah* and mentioned Al-Lât and Al-'Uzzâ in the course of his recitation and in a denunciatory strain, some of the Quraysh unbelievers instantly interrupted and protested by shouting out the couplet. Significantly enough, some versions of the story clearly state that the "satanic verses" were uttered not by the Prophet but by satan or some unbelievers at the time of the Prophet's recitation of the *sûrah*. Even the version said to have been transmitted by 'Urwah ibn al-Zubayr says first that it was "thrown in" by satan without mentioning "on the tongue of the Prophet", and later on specifically stating that "the Muslims did not hear what satan threw in on the tongues of the polytheists"(لم يكن المسلمون سمعوا الذي ألقى الشيطان على ألسنة المشركين)[2]. The same information is given in the version comimg through Ibn Shihâb al-Zuhrî wherein it is stated: "The Muslims did not hear what the devil threw in the hearing of the unbelievers"(لم يكن المسلمون سمعوا الذي ألقى الشيطان في مسامع المشركين).[3] Rightly, therefore, Ibn Taymiyyah categorically states that the alleged couplet was put by satan into the hearing of the unbelievers.[4]

The prostration by the unbelievers was thus a gesture of protest and an attempt to confuse the audience by prostrating themselves in the name of the goddesses. The act might also have been due to that stunning effect of the recitation of the Qur'ân of which we get a glimpse in the well-known incident of 'Utbah ibn Rabî'ah's having once been so moved on hearing the

1. Ibn al-Kalbî, *Kitâb al-Aṣnâm,* ed. Aḥmad Zakî Pâshâ, p. 19; Yâqût, *Mu'jam al-Buldân,* IV, 116.

2. Al-Ṭabarani, *Majma' etc.,* VI, 32-34; VIII, 70-72, Also quoted in Al-Albânî, *op.cit.,* 12-13.

3. Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr,*

4. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmû'at Fatâwâ,* II, 282.

Prophet's recitation of the Qur'ân that the other Quraysh leaders supposed that his "spell" had worked on 'Utbah.[1] It was indeed the same bewitching effect of the Qur'ân for which the Quraysh leaders constantly dubbed the Prophet as a spell-monger (*sâḥir*) and the Qur'ân as magic (*siḥr*). It was for the same reason that they stipulated with Ibn al-Dughunnah that 'Abû Bakr could stay in Makka only if he performed his prayers at home and refrained from attracting their children and womenfolk by publicly and loudly reciting the Qur'ân.[2]

In any case, since the Quraysh leaders prostrated themseves or made a show of prostration they must have been pressed by their followers to explain the act. And the only explanation which, under the circumistances, could have suggested itself to them was to say that they did so because they heard Muḥammad (ﷺ) utter those felicitating words for the goddesses. They also used the occasion to bruit abroad a rumour, particularly in Abyssinia, to the effect that a compromise had been made between them and the Prophet, and thus to induce the emigrants to return to Makka. Surely the rumour had been spread surreptitiously, or, as both 'Urwah ibn al-Zubayr's and Ibn Shihâb's versions say: "It was given currency by Satan till it reached Abyssinia" (وأظهرها الشيطان حتى بلغت الحبشة / أرض الحبشة). If the Prophet had at all mistakenly himself uttered the couplet and then realized it and retracted, as the story says, or if he had an inkling of the Quraysh leaders' manoeuvre, he would surely have managed to send a word of warning about it to the emigrants in Abyssinia.

Thus the Prophet's recitation of *sûrat al-Najm* at the Ka'ba, the prostration by the Muslims and unbelievers present there and the return of a number of emigrants on the basis of a rumour of compromise are facts. The statements that the Prophet had made a compromise with the unbelievers and had uttered the couplet are rumours spread by the unbelieving leaders. In subsequent ages, particularly during the time of the second generation after the Prophet, the facts and the baseless rumours were mixed up and the story assumed the form or forms in which we find it recorded and transmitted by some narrators and commentators.

That a number of chroniclers and commentators thought it fit to notice and transmit the story was due partly to that tendency which endeavoured to

1. *Supra,* pp. 648-649.
2. Ibn Hishâm, I, p. 373.

record and transmit all that was available of facts and fiction relating to the Prophet's life and activities, leaving it for the discerning readers to draw their own conclusions. Mainly, however, those of the commentators and scholars who have recorded the story appear to have done so with a view to finding "proofs" and illustration for the theme of *naskh* (abrogation , repeal , replacement?).[1] That is why they bring in the story not in connection with their explanation of *sûrat al-Najm* but in connection with that of 22:52 (*sûrat al-Ḥajj*). For the same purpose some of them relate the story to 17:73 (*sûrat al-'Isrâ'*). Whatever the merits of their expositions concerning the subject of *naskh,* it is obvious, as mentioned earlier, that their relating the story to these *'âyahs* is anachronistic and the clear meaning and purport of these passages positively contradict the story of compromise by the Prophet and his alleged utterance of the "satanic verses".

1. This point has been made very effectively by J. Burton in "Those are the High-Flying Cranes", *Journal of Semitic Studies,* Vol. 15, No. 2, 1970, pp. 246-265. Burton's main conclusion is that the reports about the story of the "stanic verses" are later fabrications.

CHAPTER XXX
THE CLIMAX OF OPPOSITION AND CALAMITY

1. THE BOYCOTT AND BLOCKADE OF BANÛ HÂSHIM

The failure of the Quraysh leaders to obtain extradition of the emigrants, the latter's getting a rather safe haven in Abyssinia and the unmistakbly friendly attittude of the Abyssinian ruler towards them cut the Quraysh leaders to the quick. Their anger and exasperation were further heightened by the slow but steady progress of Islam in Makka itself, particularly by the conversion of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (r.a.) about that time and the spread of the news of Islam among the Arabian tribes in general.[1] Hence the Makkan leaders now became all the more intent upon adopting the crude but historically always unsuccessful expedient of attempting to kill a faith by putting an end to the life of its propagator.[2] Yet, in spite of the coalition of all the clans on the issue of opposing Islam and the Prophet, they were clearly not in a position to come to an armed conflict with Banû Hâshim (with Banû al-Muṭṭalib) whose determination to defend the Prophet against all odds was as solid as ever. As an alternative course the Quraysh leaders decided to coerce Banû Hâshim to withdraw their protection for the Prophet by means of what modern international law calls a 'forceful method short of war', namely, boycott and blockade of Banû Hâshim. They drew up a charter of boycott undertaking to cut off all kinds of social contact and relationship with Banû Hâshim and Banû Al-Muṭṭalib including ban on intermarriage and participation in any kind of social and community activities. They also undertook to stop business and commercial transactions with them — neither to sell anything to them nor to buy from them. The leaders of all the clans affixed their consent and signature to the document and in order to impart to it a binding force and solemnity they made their goddesses witnesses to it and hung up the charter inside the Ka'ba.[3] Not only that; they also took steps to get the adhesion of the outside tribes to the policy of boycott. Particularly the Quraysh leaders entered into a pact to this effect with

1. Ibn Hisham, I, 350.
2. Ibn Sa'd, I, 208.
3. *Ibid.* , 208-209; Ibn Hishâm, I, 350; Al-Ṭabarî, *Târikh,* II, 335-336. Ibn Isḥâq says that the writer of the charter was Manṣûr ibn 'Ikrama ibn Hâshim of Banû 'Abd al-Dâr and that subsequently his hand was paralyzed (Ibn Hishâm, I, 350, 377; Ibn Sa'd, I, 209). Ibn Hishâm says, however, that the writer was Al-Naḍr ibn al-Ḥârith.

the powerful tribe of Banû Kinânah.[1] Thus the boycott had two distinct aspects, social excommunication and economic blockade. It was put in force at the beginning of the 7th year of the mission.[2]

In their turn Banû Hâshim (with Banû al-Muṭṭalib) rose equal to the occasion and took up the challenge defiantly and heroically. They also adopted a policy of counter-non-cooperation against all the other clans as long as they would not mend their ways. On the advice of their leader 'Abû Ṭâlib all the members of Banû Hâshim and Banû Al-Muṭṭalib withdrew from the different quarters of the town and started living together and unitedly in the naturally defenseve valley of 'Abû-Ṭâlib (Shi'b 'Abû Ṭâlib).[3] The strategy adopted by them seems to have been suggested also by a consideration for the safety of the Prophet; for though the Quraysh clans did not dare engage openly in an armed conflict with Banû Hâshim, it was as clear to them as to the Quraysh leaders that the sole purpose of the boycott was to get the Prophet surrendered to them for their killing him. There was thus a real threat to his otherwise being stealthily assassinated at their instance.

The defensive position taken by Banû Hâshim, however, placed them in the position of a beleagured community and rendered the enforcement of the economic blockade comparatively easier for the Quraysh leaders. In any case, the boycott and blocake was an extraordinary and significant development in Arabian tribal history as well as in the history of the town of Makka. The fissure in the façade of the Makkan Quraysh's tribal solidarity and the division of the city into two hostile camps over the Prophet and his message were now clear to all the Arab tribes. It was also clear, interestingly enough, that the Quraysh leaders, though they championed the cause of the ancient religion, were the ones who flouted the ancient and age-old custom of protecting clansmen and taking care of blood relations. Conversely the conduct of the members of Banû Hâshim, though they supported the Prophet, was in strict conformity with the traditional values and ancient customs of protecting one's clan-member and blood-relation; for they kept the issue of the faith distinct from their act and did not abandon the ancient faith while supporting the Prophet. It was only 'Abû Lahab who went against this general policy of his clan and sided openly with the Prophet's enemies.

1. *Bukhârî*, no. 1590; *Musnad*, II, 237.
2. Ibn Sa'd, I, 209.
3. Situated in the Abû Qubays mountain, not far from the Ka'ba.

The boycott and blockade lasted for more than two years.[1] During this period the blockaded people suffered immense hardships, particularly for want of water and food supplies; for the Quraysh leaders took special care to see that no food suppplies and other necessaries of life reached Banû Hâshim. According to the statements of some of the sufferers themselves, they had to starve for days together and for want of food they sometimes lived on tree-leaves.[2] Another companion of the Prophet states that he once boiled a piece of dry skin of an animal and ate it to keep himself alive.[3] The cries of starving children could be heard from outside the valley.[4] But in spite of such hardships the people of Banû Hâshim and Banû Al-Muṭṭalib remained unshaken in their determination to protect the Prophet and remained entrenched in their defensive position.

Several factors worked, however, against the Quraysh leaders and threatened the collapse not only of the boycott but their coalition itself. In the first place, the cruelty of the Quraysh overshot itself. The sufferings of Banû Hâshim who had done no wrong towards the coalition clans and who, in the eyes even of their adversaries, were performing only the time-honoured and legitimate duty of supporting and protecting their clansmen, inspired respect and sympathy in the minds of many who gardually became lukewarm in their support for the boycott, particularly as the heart-rending cries of the starving children could be heard from outside the valley. Secondly, in spite of their blind hostility towards the Prophet the Quraysh clans could not throw to the winds the age-old institution of the holy months, particularly the month of Dhû al-Ḥijjah, during which they had to stop hostilities against one another. They would probably have violated this institution too if it concerned the Makkan Quraysh alone; but it was an institution universally respected by all the Arab tribes. So the Quraysh could not just ignore it; nor could they prevail upon all the Arab tribes to do so. The upshot was that during the holy months Banû Hâshim and Banû Al-Muṭṭalib could come out of their mountain retreat and even the Prophet visited the tribes coming on pilgrimage to Makka and Minâ and preached to them.[5] Doubtless the mem-

1. Ibn Isḥâq says that it lasted for two or three years; while Mûsâ ibn 'Uqbah and Ibn Sa'd categorically state that it lasted for three years.

2. Suhayli, II, 127.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Ibn Sa'd, I, 209.

5. Ibn Sa'd, I, 209; *Bukhârî*, no. 1590; *Musnad*, II, 237.

bers of the two clans took advantage of the sacred season to gather as much provision as possible for the rest of the year.

Thirdly, there were strong ties of blood and marriage relationship between Banû Hâshim and many of the coalition clans including Banû Makhzûm, who were at the forefront in opposing the Prophet. As time went on, the conscience of many such blood relations of Banû Hâshim was pricked by their conduct, particularly by their violation of another of the time-honoured customs, that of supporting and helping one's blood-relations (*ṣilat al-raḥim*). Such relatives now saw that far from attending to this traditional duty they were doing just its opposite, namely, causing the ruin of their close relatives. Hence, although they had consented to the boycott resolution on the spur of the moment, many of them in their heart of hearts turned against it almost from the beginning. Some of them even took to smuggling food-stuffs and other provisions to their beleagured relatives in the valley of 'Abû Ṭâlib. It is on record that Ḥakîm ibn Ḥizâm of Banû Asad, a nephew (brother's son) of Khadîjah's (r.a.) and Hishâm ibn 'Amr of Banû 'Âmir, another of her close relatives, used to send food supplies to their relatives in the valley. Once, while Ḥakîm was thus taking a load of corn there he was seen by 'Abû Jahl who questioned him about the corn and, on his telling him that he was taking it to her aunt in the valley, he opposed it. An altercation ensued in the course of which 'Abû Al-Bakhtarî ibn Hishâm, also of Banû Asad, arrived there. He supported Ḥakîm and was in turn rebuked by 'Abû Jahl. The quarrel grew hotter and developed into a fracas in the course of which 'Abû Al-Bakhtarî struck 'Abû Jahl with a piece of bone and wounded him. Abû Jahl swallowed the humiliation in silence because, we are told by Ibn Isḥâq, the incident was being watched by Ḥamzah ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib and 'Abû Jahl, realizing it, adopted a low profile because he did not like the incident to have been reported to the Prophet.[1] A more substantial reason was perhaps that 'Abû Jahl apprehended that if he proceeded further with the matter it might lead to an open breach in the coalition. Another report shows that Hishâm ibn 'Amr's method of supplying food to the valley was more ingenious. He used to load a camel with provisions and then allow the animal to stray into the valley where the people of Banû Hashim used to take the load off and drive the animal out of the valley. Hishâm was similarly detected and caught in the process of his

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 354.

act by some Quraysh leaders who threatened to punish him; but, interestingly enough, the report says that 'Abû Sufyân pleaded for condoning Hishâm's act because, after all, he was attending to the duty of *ṣilat al-raḥim.*[1] The incident is illustrative of how the severity of the Quraysh backfired and how important persons of their own group viewed the boycott as not quite a just procedure which contravened the recognized and time-honoured duty of *ṣilat al-raḥim.*

A fourth factor against the Quraysh leaders was that, though they enforced the trade embargo against Banû Hâshim in so far as the Makkan traders were concerned, they could not just force all the outside tribes and traders who came to Makka on business purposes to conform to the boycott. The strategy the Quraysh leaders appear to have adopted under the circumstances was to induce those foreign traders to sell their commodities only to the Quraysh leaders by offering an inflated price or by overbidding any prospective buyer from among Banû Hâshim. Obviously, no system of commercial boycott could be effectively maintained by means of such a self-destructive method nor could the Quraysh leaders themselves bear with it for long.

When therefore the boycott ran for about three years the inevitable reaction and opposition to it set in. Significantly enough, in this phase too it was the same Hishâm ibn 'Amr of Banû 'Âmir who is found taking the intiative in organizing the opposition to the boycott.[2] He first approached Zuhayr ibn 'Abî 'Umayyah, a leader of Banû Makhzûm and son of 'Abû Ṭâlib's sister 'Atîkah bint 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, telling him that it did not behove him to live happily and enjoy all the amenities of life while he himself was being a party to the destruction of his maternal relatives. Zuhayr replied in effect that he was helpless in the matter and that if there was someone to support him he would not suffer the inhuman boycott to continue for a single day. Hishâm said that he was there to work for the cause. Zuhayr asked him to seek for the support of some more persons. Being thus encouraged by Zuhayr's attitude and word, Hishâm contacted one by one Muṭ'im ibn 'Adiyy of Banû Nawfal, 'Abû al-Bakhtarî al-'Âṣ ibn Hâshim and Zam'ah ibn al-Aswad ibn al-Muṭṭalib, both of Banû Asad, and convinced them of the need for putting an end to the boycott. These five persons then met together one night to

1. *Ibid.*, 375.
2. Ibn Hishâm, I, 374-375; Al-Ṭabarî, *Târîkh,* II, 341 (I/1196).

finalize their plan of work.[1] On the following morning they went to the Ka'ba compound where the Quraysh leaders were assembled and took positions in different places in the assembly. According to plan, Zuhayr ibn 'Abî 'Umayyah, the Makhzûmite leader, first circumambulated the Ka'ba seven times and then addressed the Quraysh leaders saying that it was not proper for them to force one of their own clans and relatives to destruction for no offence of theirs. He stated that he would not stop unless the unjust boycott was abandoned and its charter cancelled. He was immediately opposed by 'Abû Jahl who pointed out that the charter of boycott had been agreed upon by all the clans and that it could by no means be set at naught. No sooner had 'Abû Jahl finished his word than Zam'ah contradicted him from another part of the assembly, strongly supporting Zuhayr and saying that he (Zam'ah) had not been in favour of the boycott even when the unjust charter was drawn up. Simultaneously 'Abû Al-Bakhtarî rose from another part of the assembly and demanded the cancellation of the charter of boycott; and before he finished Muṭ'im ibn 'Adiyy joined the discussion and stated, in the name of Allah, that he would have nothing to do with the boycott and its charter. Finding that the support for ending the boycott was widening 'Abû Jahl remarked that this was a move which those leaders had secretly contrived to make.[2]

The end of the boycott had a touch of miracle. It is reported that in the meantime the Prophet had been informed by Allah that the unjust provisions of the charter of boycott had been eaten up and effaced by worms. He informed his uncle 'Abû Ṭâlib about it and asked him to go to the Quraysh leaders to tell them about it and to ask them therefore to cease their hostility to Banû Hâshim. Accordingly 'Abû Ṭâlib, who was sure that his nephew did never utter an untruth, took some of his men with him and went to the Quraysh leaders. It appears that he and his companions arrived at the Ka'ba just at the moment when the Quraysh leaders were engaged in the above mentioned discussions about the fate of the charter of boycott. 'Abû Ṭâlib's arrival at the spot naturally attracted the attention of the entire assemblage who rightly guessed that he had come to tell them something very urgent and important. 'Abû Ṭâlib told them what the Prophet had informed him, asking the Quraysh leaders to bring out the charter and to see it, adding that if what the Prophet had said was found to be true, they should withdraw

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 376; Al-Ṭabarî, *Târîkh,* II, 342 (I/1197).
2. *Ibid.*

their boycott and refrain from doing harm to their relatives; but if it was found to be otherwise he would withdraw his protection from the Prophet whom they could then either kill or keep alive as they liked.[1] Thereupon the Quraysh leaders brought out the charter and found to their utter surprise and dismay that what the Prophet had informed 'Abû Ṭâlib was true. Their discomfiture was complete and the opinion of the assemblage swang in favour of an immediate end of the boycott. Muṭ'im ibn 'Adiyy and his compatriots then went with their followers to the valley of 'Abû Ṭâlib and asked the clan of Banû Hâshim and Al-Muṭṭalib to come out of it and live in their respective homes. According to all the authorities the boycott thus came to an end early in the tenth year of the mission.

II. THE MIRACLE OF THE SPLITTING OF THE MOON

The miraculous destruction of the charter of boycott was preceded by a greater miracle, that of the splitting of the moon. It has been pointed out above that in spite of the boycott and blockade Banû Hâshim and the Prophet could and did come out of their valley during the sacred months. It was in the second year of the boycott when this important event took place. The Prophet was at Minâ with his companions. It was the night of the full moon. Shortly after sun-set the Prophet noticed that the full moon suddenly split up into two equal parts and appeared apart on the eastern horizon on two sides of a hill in front of them. He asked his companions to look and be witnesses of the event. They did so. It lasted for a twinkling of an eye. So did many of the unbelievers present at Minâ witness the unusual and miraculous sight.[2]

According to most of the commentators this event is referred to in Q. 54:2 which runs as follows:

﴿ اقتربت الساعة وانشقّ القمر * وإن يروا ءاية يعرضوا ويقولوا سحر مستمرّ ﴾

"The Hour (of judgement) has drawn near and the moon is cleft asunder; but even though they see a "sign", they turn away and say: this is transient magic." (54:1-2)

The past tense in the verb *inshaqqa* (انشق) used in relation to the moon in the first *'âyah* of the above passage clearly means that the event of which it speaks had actually taken place. There are, however, a number of passages in the Qur'ân wherein future events are prophesied by using past tenses.

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 377; Ibn Sa'd, I, 209-210.

2. See *Bukhârî,* nos. 3868-3871; 4864-4868; *Muslim;* nos. 2800-2803; *Musnad,* I, 377, 413; IV, 81-82.

This is specially so wherein a serious disruption in the solar system at the approach of the Day of Judgement is prophesied.[1] On that basis one might be inclined to think that the passage 54:1-2 is prophetic in nature and speaks of an event yet to take place. But the passage under reference is distinguished from those other passages in at least three main respects. In the first place, in those passages more than one object are mentioned, such as the sun and the moon, or the skies, the stars, the sun and the moon, or the sun, the earth, the mountains, etc. In the present instance, however, the moon is singled out for special mention. Secondly, the verbs used in those passages are almost invariably preceded by the expression *'idhâ* (إِذَا), indicating unmistakably that they bear a future sense. Thirdly, in the passage under discussion its second *'âyah* speaks of the remark of the unbelievers at the sight of the "sign", which clearly shows that the event spoken of had taken place and that the unbelievers, even though they observed it, treated it as a transient 'magic'.

In fact a number of the companions of the Prophet, such as 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ûd, Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamân and Jubayr ibn Muṭ'im (r.a.), were eye-witnesses to the event and they categorically attest it. Other companions like 'Anas ibn Mâlik and 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbâs (r.a.), though they had not witnessed the event, attest it with equal emphasis. They must have received the account from their contemporaries who had witnessed the event. It is further clear from the reports that a number of the unbelievers present at Minâ at the time also saw the sight, but they remarked that it was a magic performed on them by the Prophet.[2] Some of them, differing from their compatriots, remarked that even if the Prophet could have performed a magic on those who had been present there at Minâ, he could not have done so on those who were not present there. And it so happened that some persons arrived there from outside Minâ and similarly stated that they had seen the unusual sight.[3] The second *'âyah* of the passage under discussion obviously refers to such remarks of the unbelievers of the occurrence.

The report given by 'Anas ibn Mâlik (r.a.) says that the event was a miracle performed in response to the unbelievers' demand for a "proof" of the

1. See for instance Q. 75:7-9; 81:1-6; 82:1-3 and 84:1-4.
2. See for instance *Musnad*, IV, 81-82.
3. *Ibid.* See also Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr*, VII, 447-450 and Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr*, 27/50-52 where almost all the reports on the subject are given.

truth of the Prophet's claim to prophethood.[1] But from the reports of the eye-witnesses it does not appear to have been performed by the Prophet in response to the demand of the unbelievers. Also the Qur'anic passage quoted above specifically mentions it as a sign of Allah's power and of the inevitability and nearness in point of time of the Day of Judgement. The circumstantial evidence also points out that it was not performed on the demand of the unbelievers. As mentioned above, it occurred at the end of the second year of the boycott when the Quraysh leaders had obviously abandoned the policy of argumentation and had resolved upon either ruining Banû Hâshim or procuring the person of the Prophet for killing him. It was therefore no time for them to demand a proof of his prophetood, nor for him to ask Allah to provide him with a miracle in order to satisfy the unbelievers.

Skeptics might say that it is inconceivable and against the law of nature that such a large celestial object as the moon should split itself into two parts, each part moving thousands of miles away from the other and then both once again coming together and joining to return to their former state. They might also say that if such a thing had ever happened it would have been observed by many all over the world and would also have been recorded by historians and astronomers. Both these objections are, however, not tenable. As Maudûdî points out,[2] if one believes in God, one would not find any difficulty in acknowledging that He in His infinite power can do anything inconceivable on man's part or what appears to him to be against the law of nature. After all nature itself is God's creation. But even from the point of view of modern science which supposes that the solar system came into being as a result of a gigantic explosion in the sun it would not appear totally inconceivable that the moon could split apart on account of an internal explosion and the parts then came together once again as a result of their magnetic attraction. As regards the second objection, the moon is sighted only in half of the world at a time. There was also no prior announcement or expectation of the phenomenon. Nor were astronomical observatories so developed at the time. Also the incident was a very quick one. It is thus no wonder that it was not sighted by many and not recorded by them.

III. THE YEAR OF GRIEF (*'ÂM AL-ḤUZN*)

The end of the boycott and the coming out of Banû Hâshim and Banû Al-

1. *Bukhârî,* no. 3868; *Musnad,* III, 165.
2. Maudûdî, *op.cit,* II, 617-618.

Muṭṭalib from their mountain retreat undoubtedly marked a triumph on their part and on the part of the Prophet. But that very year, the tenth year of the mission, has been designated by the Prophet himself as the 'Year of Grief'. This is because shortly after the end of the boycott and in the second half of that year he lost two of his nearest and dearest ones. Both his uncle 'Abû Ṭâlib and his wife Khadîjah (r.a.) died at an interval of only a month or so.[1] From a worldly point of view the loss was irreparable and it dealt a severe blow to him personally. 'Abû Ṭâlib was the head of the clan and it was because of his unflinching support for the Prophet that Banû Hâshim and Banû Al-Muṭṭalib stood unitedly against all the other clans. His removal from the scene caused a vacuum in the clan leadership which was never filled. More importantly, the unity of the two clans on the question of protecting the Prophet received a set-back and, as it appears, soon broke down so that the Prophet had before long to seek help and protection from other quarters. Khadîjah (r.a.), on the other hand, was the Prophet's most devoted and trusted friend who shared his happiness and sorrow, consoled and comforted him in moments of distress and encouraged and helped him against all imaginable odds. The loss of such a companion was hard to overcome. Throughout the rest of his life the Prophet cherished her noble memory.

Two incidents in connection with 'Abû Ṭalib's death deserve mention. It is reported by Ibn Isḥâq that on the eve of 'Abû Ṭâlib's death the Quraysh leaders waited on him at his death-bed and requested him to effect a compromise between them and his nephew (the Prophet). Accordingly he called the Prophet and informed him of the Quraysh leaders' proposals. As usual, however, the Prophet once again invited them to accept Islam but they refused to do so.[2] If the report is correct, it shows that the Quraysh leaders, on the failure of their boycott and in view of the approaching end of 'Abû Ṭâlib's life, once again attempted to induce the Prophet to a make a compromise with them.

The second incident is that when 'Abû Ṭâlib was on his death-bed the Prophet entreated him to abandon his old faith and make a profession of Islam, adding that that would enable him (the Prophet) to intercede for him ('Abû Ṭâlib) with Allah. The proud old man, however, declined to do so on the plea that if he professed Islam at the moment of his death the Quraysh

1. The reports differ regarding the order of death of the two.

2. Ibn Hishâm, I, 417.

leaders would taunt him by saying that he did so because he was afraid of death.[1]

The removal of 'Abû Ṭâlib from the scene acted as a signal for the Quraysh leaders' renewed hostility towards the Prophet. That they did not immediately proceed to get hold of the Prophet and do away with him was due understandably to the fact that it took some time for Banû Hâshim and Banû Al-Muṭṭalib to abandon him, while the Quraysh leaders themselves had not as yet recovered from the differences within their own ranks which had led to the abandonment of the boycott. It was most probably due to this weakness on their part that they, as noted above, once again made an attempt for a compromise. However, those who had not yet dared assault the Prophet now took courage to do so. The incidents noted earlier[2] of Abû Jahl's or someone else's placing a heap of dust on the Prophet's shoulder while he was prostrating himself in prayer at the Ka'ba and that of 'Uqba ibn 'Abî Mu'ayiṭ's similarly heaping the abdominal wastes of a slaughtered animal on the Prophet's back while prostrate in prayer belong most probably to this post-boycott period.

After 'Abû Ṭâlib's death it did not take long for 'Abû Lahab to establish his hold over Banû Hâshim and make them withdraw their protection from the Prophet. Initially, however, 'Abû Lahab appears to have proposed to act in line with the mood of his clan and thereby to get his leadership accepted by them. Ibn Sa'd has a report that on 'Abû Ṭâlib's death 'Abû Lahab told the Prophet that like the latter he ('Abû Lahab) would also do his duty as an uncle and would protect him against the enmity of the others. It is further stated that when one day the Prophet was being abused by Ibn al-Ghayṭalah (Qays ibn'Adiyy al-Sahmî) 'Abû Lahab opposed him. Ibn al-Ghayṭalah raised a hue and cry over 'Abû Lahab's attitude and complained to the other Quraysh leaders that he had abandoned his ancestral religion. Thereupon the Quraysh leaders came to 'Abû Lahab to ascertain the truth. He told them that he had not abandoned his ancestral religion but that as the leader of Banû Hâshim and as an uncle it was his duty to protect the Prophet from any personal harm being done to him. They went away but did not leave the matter there. A few days afterwards 'Abû Jahl and 'Uqbah ibn Abî Mu'ayṭ insti-

1. *Bukhârî,* no. 4771 ; *Muslim,* no. 24 . See also Al- Qurṭubî, *Tafsîr.* 8/272; Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsir,* VI,256; Al-Bayhaqî *Dalâ'il* etc., II, 242, 243; Ibn al-Jawzî, *Al-Wafâ etc.,*200-209.

2. *Supra,* pp. 652-654. See also Ibn Hishâm, 1,416.

gated 'Abû Lahab to ask his nephew about the fate of his ('Abû Lahab's) father 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. 'Abû Lahab did so and was told by the Prophet that 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib would be where the others of his people would be. When 'Abû Lahab reported this to the Quraysh leaders they told him that it meant that his father would be in hell.'Abû Lahab therefore sought a clarification from the Prophet who then told him that like other unbelievers and polytheists 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib too will be in hell. The report says that at that reply of the Prophet 'Abû Lahab turned against him and vowed to remain for ever his enemy.[1] Whatever the truth about the details in this story it shows how 'Abû Lahab was quickly won over to their side by the Quraysh opponents of the Prophet.

That the Prophet soon lost the solid support of his clan is evident from the fact that he henceforth sought support and protection from the other tribes of Arabia; and in the course of the same search for support he visited Ṭâ'if in the second half of the same year. Before noticing these developments, however, it would be worthwhile to take note of the orientalists' views and assumptions regarding the Makkan opposition to the Prophet.

1. Ibn Sa'd, I, 210-211

CHAPTER XXXI

THE MAKKAN OPPOSITION AND THE ORIENTALISTS: WATT'S THEORY ABOUT THE CAUSES AND BEGINNING OF OPPOSITION

I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The orientalists' views about the Makkan unbelievers' opposition to the Prophet may be considered under three main headings: (a) their analysis of the causes and beginning of opposition; (b) their assessment of the nature and extent of the opposition and (c) the unbelievers' objections *vis-à-vis* the orientalists' views. The present and the following two chapters deal respectively with these three aspects of their views.

So far as the theme of the causes and beginning of opposition is concerned it is mainly the views of Watt that call for attention if only because he advances a new theory in this respect though it draws directly and indirectly on the views of his predecessors. The views of Muir and Margoliouth are more or less similar in this regard and these are also largely in accord with the information given in the sources.

Agreeing in essence with Ibn Isḥâq's statement Muir says that general opposition to the Prophet was organized when he began "publicly to summon his fellow-citizens to the faith" and to abuse the idols.[1] The main reason, according to Muir, was the Makkans' attachment "to the worship of the Kaaba", "the glory of Mecca and the centre of pilgrimage from all Arabia". They apprehended that this "was in danger of being set at nought". Hence they were determined to crush the doctrine and to force its followers to abandon it.[2]

Echoing more or less similar views Margoliouth says: "Mecca lived mainly by its being a religious centre" and the pagan institution of the four months of peace. The Makkans feared, he writes, that the Prophet aimed at destroying the Ka'ba and the position of Makka as the religious centre. "An early revelation seems intended to reassure the Meccans on this point."[3] Further on he says that the declaration of "There is no God but Allah" was the

1. Muir, *op.cit.*, 3rd edition, 61.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Margoliouth, *op.cit.*, 119-120. The allusion is clearly to *sûrah* 106.

first and foremost cause of opposition.[1] He also says that there was a political reason for it. "Political and religious headships could not be separated", he observes, and the Makkans "were not prepared to see Mohammed at the head of the state."[2]

Thus both Muir and Margoliouth say in effect that the religious and economic interests of the Quraysh were bound up with the Ka'ba and that their opposition had thus both religious and economic motives behind it. And though Muir does not specifically hint here at the political reason, it is implicit in his treatment of the subject in general, particularly in his assumption about the Prophet's alleged "ambition" and political aims.

In his turn Watt builds on and elaborates the religious, economic and political motives behind the opposition hinted at by Muir, Margoliouth and others. In doing so, however, he advances a new theory. Taking his cue obviously from Muir's or rather Ibn Isḥâq's statement that general opposition to the Prophet was organized when he began publicly to preach and denounce the idols, Watt relates it to his, or rather Bell's, view about the message of the early Qur'ânic passages. It may be recalled that Watt attempts to show that the early Qur'ânic revelations do not contain strict monotheism and rejection of the idols.[3] Now he links that assumption, on the one hand, with the "mention" or denunciation of idols which occasioned the opposition and, on the other, with the spurious story of the 'satanic verses'. He suggests that since initially the Prophet's monotheism was only vague, his alleged utterance of the verses in recognition of the idols was only an expression of views he had hitherto held and that it marked an attempt at compromise between him and the Quraysh leaders. Therefore the alleged abrogation of the conciliatory verses meant a failure of the compromise. This failure, says Watt, led the Prophet to denounce the idols and consequently to the beginning of opposition to him. To formulate this theory Watt quotes a letter written by 'Urwah ibn al-Zubayr to the *Khalîfah* 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwân (686-705/65-86 H.) and blends its information with the story of the 'satanic verses'. He also puts his own construction on some of the Qur'ânic passages noted earlier in connection with the story[4] in order

1. *Ibid.,* 120-121.
2. *Ibid.,* 144.
3. See *supra,* Chap. XXIII.
4. *Supra,* pp. 683-695. See also *infra,* pp.728-732.

to support as much his theory as the story itself. Finally he discusses what he thinks to be the religious, economic and political issues involved in the conflict between the Prophet and the Quraysh leaders.

II. WATT'S USE OF 'URWAH'S LETTER AND OF THE STORY OF THE 'SATANIC VERSES'

Watt starts his discussion by asking two questions: (a) "When and how did opposition" began and (b) what were "the main motives" behind it? In finding an answer to the first question he quotes in translation 'Urwah ibn al-Zaubayr's letter to *Khalîfah* 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwân. This letter is transmitted by 'Urwah's son Hishâm and recorded by Al-Ṭabarî.[1] The main points of this letter may be recapitulated, using Watt's translation of it, as follows:[2]

(1) When the Messenger of Allah "summoned his tribe to accept the guidance" they did not at first hold back "but almost hearkened to him, until he mentioned their idols (tawâghît)."

(2) From Ṭâ'if "there came some of the Quraysh, owners of property (*sc.*there)" and opposed him and "roused against him those who obeyed them. So the body of the people turned back from him".

(3) "Then there was a time of extreme trial (*fitnah*) and upheaval for the people of Islam...."

(4) "When the Muslims were treated in this way" the Prophet asked them to "go away to the land of the Abyssinians" and the main body of them went there.

(5) The Prophet himself continued to stay at Makka."For years they (*sc.*Quraysh) continued to act harshly to those of them who became Muslims....."

Out of this document Watt makes three points: (a) The "first active oppo-

1. Al-Ṭabarî, *Târîkh*, II, 328-329 (1/1180-1181)
2. Watt, *M. at M*, 100-101. The Arabic text as given by Al-Ṭabarî runs as follows:

حدثنا على بن نصر بن على الجهضمى ، وعبدالوارث بن عبدالصمد ابن عبدالوارث ـ قال على بن نصر : حدثنا عبدُالصّمد بن عبدالوارث ، وقال عبدالوارث : حدثنى أبى ـ قال : حدثنا أبان العطّار ، قال : حدثنا هشام بن عُروة ، عن عُروة ، أنه كتب إلى عبدالملك بن مروان : أما بعد ، فإنه ـ يعنى رسول‌الله ﷺ ـ لما دعا قومه لما بعثه الله من الهُدى والنور الذى أنزل عليه ، لم يبعدُوا منه أول ما دعاهم ، وكادوا يسمعون له ، حتى ذكر طواغيتهم. وقدم ناس من الطائف من قُريش لهم أموال ، أنكروا ذلك عليه ، واشتدوا عليه ، وكرهوا ما قال [لهم] ، وأغرَوْا به مَنْ أطاعهم ، فانصفق عنه عامةُ الناس فتركوه إلا من حفظه الله منهم ؛ وهم قليل ؛ فمكث بذلك ما قدّر الله أن يمكث. ثم ائتمرت رءوسهم بأن يفتنوا منْ تبعه عن دين الله من أبنائهم وإخوانهم وقبائلهم، فكانت فتنة شديدة الزلزال على مَن اتَّبع رسول الله ﷺ من أهل الإسلام، فافتتن مَن افتتن، وعصَم الله منهم مَنْ شاء، فلمَا فعل ذلك بالمسلمين، أمرهم رسول الله ﷺ أن يخرجُوا إلى أرض الحبَشة ـ وكان بالحبشة مَلكٌ صالح يقال له النجاشيّ، لا يُظلَم أحدٌ بأرضه، وكان يثنى عليه مع ذلك صلاح، وكانت أرض الحبشة مَتْجَرا لقريش يتّجرون فيها، يجدون فيها رَفاغا من الرزق، وأمناً ومتجراً حسناً ـ فأمرهم بها رسول الله ﷺ ؛ فذهب إليها عامتهم لما قهروا بمكَة، وخاف عليهم الفتن، ومكث هو فلم يبْرح، فمكث بذلك سنوات، يشتدّون على مَنْ أسلم منهم . ثم إنه فشا الإسلام فيها، ودخل فيه رجال من أشرافهم.

sition" was due to the "mention of idols (presumably in the Qur'ân)"; (b) "some Quraysh with property in at-Ṭa'if were the leaders of the movement against Muḥammad" and (c) "all this preceded the migration to Abyssinia". Watt adds that there is "not much difficulty" in accepting the last two points but "there is some about the first". For Nöldeke's and Bell's dating of the Qur'ân gives many passages, "prior to the mention of idols", that contain or imply opposition to the Prophet. Also, notes Watt, 'Urwah was writing seventy years after the events, and he might have merely *inferred* that "the attack on polytheism must have been the cause of the opposition then because it led to much opposition later". Watt further points out that it is "conceivable, but not likely" that the 'mention of idols' refers to the 'satanic verses', for that would imply that the "Quraysh were annoyed because the shrine of at-Ṭâ'if was being given too much prominence" and its people placed at par with the Makkans.[1] Nevertheless Watt accepts "provisionally" the first point, namely, that "more active opposition appeared after the mention of the idols"; for the reference made by 'Urwah "to the Quraysh of at-Ṭâ'if" indicates that he had "some good source of evidence independent of the Qur'ân."[2]

It is worth noting that so far as the first and third of Watt's points, namely, that the first active opposition was due to the "mention" of idols and that "all this preceded the migration to Abyssinia" are concerned, these are very much clear from the works of Ibn Isḥâq and others. Therefore, obviously, Watt's main reason for invoking 'Urwah's letter is to bring home the second point, namely, as he puts, that "some Quraysh with property in at-Ṭâ'if were the leaders of the movement against Muḥammad"(ﷺ). Before proceeding to notice how he seeks to do that, a few remarks may be made on his above noted statements. The "difficulty" of which he speaks in connection with 'Urwah's letter, particularly in accepting the first point, is Watt's own creation. He conceives the early passages of the Qur'ân to be devoid of strict monotheism and denunciation of the idols, which is a totally wrong assumption, and on that basis regards 'Urwah's letter as striking a new note. The fact is that neither are the early passages of the Qur'ân devoid of strict monotheism and denunciation of the idols, nor is 'Urwah's evidence "independent" of, that is different from, that of the Qur'ân. Watt himself presumes

1. Watt *M at M.*,101. He mentions subsequently that Al-Lât, Al-'Uzzâ and Manat were the "reigning goddesses" of Ṭâ'if, Nakhla and Qudayd respectively.

2. *Ibid.*

that the mention of idols spoken of is that in the Qur'ân. As shown before,[1] not only is Watt's selection of the early passages purposeful and defective, his interpretation of them is also faulty. The early passages do contain strict monotheism and they do denounce the worship of idols. As Watt now admits, even Nöldeke's and Bell's dating gives many passages in which opposition to the Prophet is asserted or implied. That means the criterion adopted by Watt to reject a passage as not early simply because it speaks of or implies opposition to the Prophet is not valid. It may also be noted that the qualifying phrase, "prior to the mention of idols", applied to those passages of Nöldeke and Bell, is Watt's own description.

But though mentioning what he conceives to be a difficulty in accepting 'Urwah's information on the first point, Watt actually accepts it as the basis of his further discussion. Similarly, though he points out that the "mention of idols" spoken of by 'Urwah was "not likely" to have reference to the story of the 'satanic verses', Watt porceeds just to linking up the two. That is why he gives a twist to 'Urwah's statement when he says that according to it "some Quraysh with property in at-Ṭâ'if were the leaders of the movement against Muḥammad" (ﷺ). It may at once be pointed out that this is not exactly what 'Urwah says. He unequivocally says, in Watt's own translation, "from at-Ṭa'if there came some of the Quraysh, owners of property". The addition "(*sc*. there)" in brackets is Watt's own. There is no support for Watt's formulation in the words of 'Urwah.[2] And it is because of this twisting by himself that he finds it necessary to point out that if the "mention of idols" is related to the story of the 'satanic verses', it would imply that the "Quraysh were annoyed because the shrine of at-Ṭâ'if was being given too much prominence", etc. 'Urwah of course speaks of the Quraysh of Ṭa'if who were owners of wealth, not of the Quraysh of Makka having property at Ṭa'if, which is what Watt suggests. He does so with a view to relating the "mention of idols" with the story of the 'satanic verses'. That is why he gives a further twist to 'Urwah's information a little afterwards and postulates it as some Makkan leaders having business interests at Ṭa'if.[3] It needs to be recalled here that the story of the 'satanic verses', whatever its merit, relates to the Quraysh of Makka; and it was not with the people of Ṭâ'if that the

1. *Supra*, Ch.XXIII, See specially pp.569-582.
2. 'Urwah's wourds are:﴿ وقدم ناس من الطائف من قريش لهم أموال ... ﴾
3. *Infra*, pp.726-727.

alleged compromise was made.

It is not simply by twisting 'Urwah's information but also the story of the 'satanic verses' itself that Watt links up the two. Thus he next says that 'the most notable mention of the idols in the Meccan part of the Qur'ân is in Sûrat an-Najm (53 and thereby hangs a tale".[1] The 'tale' which he then reproduces is the spurious story of the 'satanic verses' which has been noted earlier.[2] It is therefore not necessary here to go into a discussion of its merits. Here we shall concentrate our attention only on how Watt uses the story to build up his theory. It may be noted, however, that all the versions of the story, despite their differences, agree in relating it as a consequence of the growth of opposition. They all also link it with the episode of the temporary return of the emigrants from Abyssinia. Watt, however, disconnects the story from the Abyssinian episode; he also treats it as an event prior to or leading to the growth of opposition.

After having reproduced the story Watt makes two points out of it. He says that (a) "at one time Muḥammad must have publicly recited the satanic verses as part of the Qur'ân" and (b) that "at some later time" he "announced that these verses were not really part of the Qur'ân and should be replaced by others".[3] Watt's reason for accepting these as facts is that "it is unthinkable that the story could have been invented later by Muslims or foisted upon them by non-Muslims".[4] He further says that since Al-Lât, Al-'Uzzâ and Manât were the reigning deities respectively of Ṭâ'if, Nakhlah and Qudayd (between Makka and Madina), the primary reference of the satanic verses was to the worship of those places. "The implication of the satanic verses is thus", says Watt, that "the ceremonies at three important shrines in the neighbourhood of Mecca is acceptable". Similarly, the implication of the abrogating verses saying that the worship of these places is unacceptable "is *not* a condemnation of the worship of the Ka'ba".[5]

As indicated above, we would not enter here into the merits of the story. Nor, perhaps, is it of much use in arguing the matter; for Watt would not just like to examine the evidences on which the story purports to stand. His best

1. Watt, *M. at M.,* 101.
2. *Supra,* chap. XXIX.
3. Watt, *op.cit.,*103.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.,* 103-104.

argument is that which he gives above. It may therefore be only pointed out that the story was not really invented by Muslims, nor foisted upon them by non-Muslims; but it was fabricated by those who dissimulated as Muslims and who are generally spoken of as *zindiqs* and who are indeed responsible for the currency of many forged traditions. Let us therefore only see how Watt makes up his story out of the others' story.

Having accepted the story as facts Watt proceeds to supply its "motives and explanations". He says that the Muslim scholars, "not possessing the modern Western concept of gradual development", found it difficult to explain how the Prophet "failed to notice the heterodoxy of the satanic verses". The truth is, says Watt, that the Prophet's "monotheism was originally, like that of his more enlightened contemporaries, somewhat vague" and "was not so strict that the recognition of inferior divine beings was felt to be incompatible with it". Probably, explains Watt, like the Judaeo-Christian concept of angels, the Prophet regarded Al-Lât, Al-'Uzzâ and Manât as celestial beings of a lower grade than God. Hence his uttering of the satanic verses did not mark "any conscious retreat from monotheism" but simply "an expression of views" which he "had always held".[1]

Having thus suggested that it was not unnatural on the Prophet's part to have uttered the satanic verses because these were in accord with the views he "had always held" and because his monotheism was initially only vague like that of his "more enlightened contemporaries", Watt gives the reason for the Prophet's doing so. He says that the "political implications of the verses are interesting" and asks: Was the Prophet "interested in gaining adherents at Medina and at-Ṭâ'if and among the surrounding tribes? Was he trying to counterbalance the influence of the leaders of Quraysh, who were opposed to him, by having large numbers of supporters? At the very least the mention of these shrines is a sign that his vision is expanding".[2]

The explanation thus given of the nature of the Prophet's faith and of his motive in allegedly uttering the satanic verses is illustrative only of Watt's own confusion and inconsistency. Not only is the assumption that the Prophet's monotheism was intitially vague and indistinct from that of his more enlightened contemporaries wrong and based on a faulty selection of the early passages of the Qur'ân, it is also inconsistent with the "concept of gradual development" of which Watt accuses the Muslim scholars of being

1. *Ibid.*, 104.

bereft. For, if the Prophet's monotheism was not distinct from or an improvement upon the so-called vague monotheism of the time, he would not have attracted any special attention, as he no doubt did, and none would have cared to follow him, as by all accounts many did. A true concept of gradual development presupposes that Muḥammad's (ﷺ) claim to prophethood must have marked a disticnt and noticeable improvment upon the vague monotheism of his contemporaries. It is also somewhat incorrect to suggest, as Watt here does, that the vague monotheism of the time was compatible with a recognition of the efficacy of the goddesses. For, if by "enlightened contemporaries" Watt means the *ḥanîfs*, then these latter, by all accounts, had distinctly abandoned and denounced idol worship. If, on the other hand, the allusion is to the Jews and Christians of the time, then many of their beliefs and practices were of course not very distinct from polytheism.

Again, if the Prophet regarded Al-Lât, Al-'Uzzâ and Manât as celestial beings of a lower grade than God, like the Jews' and Christians' recognition of the angels, as Watt says, and if the recognition of the function of the goddesses mentioned was "simply... an expression of views which Muḥammad had always held", then it is not understandable why such recognition should have in any way impressed and pleased the Quraysh leaders or the neighbouring tribes, drawing them towards him. For, according to Watt, the Prophet had not as yet openly and distinctly turned against those idols, while the worship of them was already in vogue among those people without even the Prophet's approval of it. Why, again, the Prophet should try "to counterbalance the influence of the leaders of Quraysh, who were opposed to him, by having a large number of supporters" when, according to Watt, no opposition to the Prophet had as yet developed and no Quraysh leaders had as yet been opposed to him? Again, if the recognition given in the satanic verses meant that "the ceremonies at three important shrines in the neighbourhood of Mecca" were "acceptable", as Watt says, and if the withdrawal of that recognition was "*not* a condemnation of the worship of the Ka'bah", then how could it please or displease the Quraysh of Makka?

Watt of course attempts to explain why the Makkan Quraysh leaders should have been inclined towards making a compromise with the Prophet. Thus, having suggested that the recognition of the three shrines was a sign that Muḥammad's political vision was expanding, Watt draws attention to 'Abû al-'Âliyah's version of the story of the satanic verses and to the well-

known reports about the Quraysh leaders' offers of compromise to the Prophet and says that, on the whole, "the picture of Muḥammad's position given by the stories is probably near the truth" — that he was initially sufficiently successful to induce the Quraysh leaders to make "some sort of offer" to him. The Prophet, says Watt, "was to receive certain worldly advantages and in return make some acknowledgement of their deities... The promulgation of the satanic verses is doubtless to be linked up with this bargain".[1]

Now, the most blatant inconsistency in the above noted observations of Watt's is that he has hitherto said that the promulgation of the satanic verses meant a recognition of the deities of the three shrines at Ṭâ'if, Nakhlah and Qudayd and that this move by the Prophet implied, "at the least", that his political vision was expanding, that probably he was trying to "counterbalance the influence of the leaders of Quraysh, who were opposed to him". Now, in his immediately succeeding paragraph, Watt would have us believe that the promulgation of the satanic verses was the "bargain" which the Quraysh leaders made with the Prophet in lieu of their giving him "certain worldly advantages", that it meant an "acknowledgement of their deities". Does Watt mean to say that the very move which the Prophet is supposed to have made in order to counterbalance the influence of the opposing Quraysh leaders and to expand his sphere of influence was now accepted by those very Quraysh leaders as a bargain and as an acknowledgement of their deities? No confusion could have been worse confounded!

Again, how could this "acknowledgement of their deities" be a bargain for them if the Prophet had not previously turned against those deities and had only regarded them as "celestial beings of a lower grade than God"? After all, the position given to those goddesses in the satanic verses was no more than that of intercessors, i.e., of celestial beings of a lower grade than God. Again, by Watt's own admission, it was the Quraysh leaders who, in view of the Prophet's initial success, made the move for a compromise. It was therefore they who were to offer some substantial consideration to the Prophet; but the supposed compromise is surprisingly silent about that. Watt apparently relieves himself of this question by simply observing that of "details we cannot be certain". How then could one be so "doubtless" about the bargain when the details are admittedly so uncertain and when the

1. *Ibid.*, 105

alleged compromise is singularly silent about the consideration which the Quraysh leaders ought to have offered to the Prophet?

No less confusing and inconsistent is what is said next by Watt about the "abrogation of the satanic verses". He says that "the abrogation" of the verses meant the "failure of the compromise". As reason for this failure he says that the Quraysh leaders did not "double-cross" the Prophet but that he

(a) "came to realize that the acknowledgement of the Banât Allah, as the three idols (and others) were called, meant reducing God to their level".

(b) He also realized that since his "worship at the Ka'bah was not very different from theirs" at Ṭâ'if, Nakhlah and Qudayd, the compromise he had made "would mean that God's messenger was not greatly different from their priests and not likely to have much more influence; hence the reform on which Muḥammad had set his heart would not come about".

(c) He also realized that such "acknowledgement of the goddesses would lead to the failure of the mission he had been given by God".

(d) Further, since the "worship at the Ka'bah, which had previously been polytheistic, was being purified and for the Muslims at least being made monotheistic", the Prophet realized that if similar worship was carried on at several shrines, "the people of the Ḥijâz would inevitably suppose that several roughly equal deities were being worshipped".

(e) Also, the phrase Banât Allah, "daughters of God", "could be interpreted to mean that these were beings roughly equal with God; and that could not be reconciled with monotheism".

It must at once be pointed out that there was no question of abrogating the so-called satanic verses; for the alleged verses were never uttered by the Prophet. The story is a downright fabrication. But let us only see here the inconsistency in Watt's statements. It is said that the so-called abrogation meant the failure of the compromise and withdrawal of the "acknowledgement of their deities". This is in direct conflict with Watt's statement (at his p. 104) that the abrogation of the satanic verses was "*not* a condemnation of the worship of the Ka'bah". Secondly, Watt has hitherto suggested that the Prophet's monotheism was so vague till the utterance of the satanic verses that the recognition of the goddesses was not incompatible with it and that this recognition was given in response to the Makkans' desire for a compromise. But now he reverts from both these premises. He suggests, on the

1. *Ibid.*, 105-106.

one hand, that the Prophet "truned down the offer of the Meccans" because "he came to realize that the acknowledgement of the Banât Allah... meant reducing God to their level" and would "lead to the failure" of the mission given him by God. Also that the phrase "Banât Allah" might be interpreted to mean that "these were beings roughly equal with God; and that could not be reconciled with monotheism" (see a, c & d above). Does Watt mean to say that the Prophet, who had hitherto been only a vague monotheist, suddenly grew to be a strict monotheist and therefore broke the compromise? But Watt does not seem to stick to that position either. Thus, he immediately shifts his ground from Makka to the other shrines and observes that the Prophet set aside the compromise because his "worship at the Ka'bah was outwardly not very different from theirs" at those shrines and this would mean that "God's messenger was not greatly different from their priests and not likely to have much more influence" (see b above). But once again Watt shifts his ground and in effect contradicts the above statement and says that the worship at the Ka'ba, "which had previously been polytheistic, was being purified and for the Muslims at least being made monotheistic". Hence the Prophet set aside the compromise because if "similar worship was carried on at several shrines, the people of the Ḥijâz would inevitably suppose that several roughly equal deities were being worshipped (see d above). Does Watt mean here that recognizing the three goddesses would be similarizing the worship at the Ka'ba and the other shrines and making it monotheistic? At any rate, this last statement of his is a contradiction of his previous statement to the effect that the Prophet's worship at the Ka'ba prior to the making of the alleged compromise was not very different from theirs at those places.

Evidently these inconsistent and confusing statements of Watt are due to his double standards and dual loyalty. He first assumes that the satanic verses were intended by the Prophet to winning over the people of Ṭâ'if, Nakhlah and Qudayd; then he (Watt) suggests that the verses were uttered in response to the Quraysh leaders' desire for a compromise conceding to them an "acknowledgement of their deities". Watt starts with the basic assumption that the Prophet's monotheism till the utterance of the satanic verses was vague and not incompatible with the recognition of the goddesses; but then Watt seeks to explain the failure of the compromise and the Prophet's rejection of it by assuming that his monotheism was indeed incompatible with such a recognition of the idols. Watt suggests that the abrogation of the

satanic verses constituted a cancellation of the compromise with the Makkan leaders; yet he says that the Prophet did so because he apprehended misunderstanding by the people of the other places and that nonetheless the abrogation was "*not* a condemnation of the worship of the Ka'bah". Clearly Watt is ill-served by his loyalty once to the Makkan Quraysh and again to the shrines at Ṭâ'if, Nakhlah and Qudayd.

Thus having linked up, with a good deal of inconsistent and confusing statements, what is called the Prophet's break with the leading men of Makka with the story of the satanic verses Watt proceeds to show that this view is in accord with 'Urwah's information, namely, that some propertied Quraysh of Ṭâ'if took the lead in opposing the Prophet. In other words Watt now attempts to show why the Makkan leaders were interested in getting a recognition of the goddesses of the other shrines and why the withdrawal of that recognition angered them. He says that the "most likely explanation" of 'Urwah's statement is that those "were some of the leading members of Quraysh who were specially interested in the commerce of at-Ṭâ'if" and had brought the commercial activities of that place "within the orbit of Makkan finance". Hence the removal of recognition from the shrine of Al-Lât "must some-how or other have threatened their enterprises and stirred their anger against Muḥammad"[1].

As already pointed out, this formulation of the case is contrary to what 'Urwah says. He unequivocally says that some Quraysh people *came* from Ṭâ'if, *not* some Makkan Quraysh people having property or business connection at Ṭâ'if. The verb *qadima* (قدم) meaning "came" and the expression *nâs min al-Ṭâ'if* (ناس من الطائف) meaning people from Ṭâ'if leave no room for supposing that 'Urwah meant some Quraysh people of Makka having property or business connection at Ṭâ'if.

Whatever the meaning of 'Urwah's statement, the most telling objection to Watt's theory is that it does not explain why, of all the Quraysh leaders, only a few of them supposedly having material interests in Ṭâ'if should have taken the initiative in obtaining the Prophet's recognition of the goddesses not only of that place but also of those of the other places, notwithstanding the fact that his worship at the Ka'ba, as Watt would have us believe, had hitherto been not clearly distinguishable from that performed at those places and the goddesses at the Ka'ba itself had as yet not been denounced and

1. *Ibid.*,106-107.

abandoned? Any intelligent person, specially a businessman, would under the situation have rather followed the policy of letting the "sleeping dog lie" and would not have agitated the issue by pressing for recognition specifically of the goddesses of the neighbouring shrines. It needs also to be explained how the Prophet's recognition of the idols at those places would be of advantage to the commercial traffic there, or how his withdrawal of such recognition would adversely affect that traffic. After all, neither the continuance and discontinuance of the worship of those idols there, nor the commercial operations connected with them were till then in any way dependent upon his recognition or non-recognition.

Watt states that the "removal of recognition from the shrine of al-Lât must somehow or other have threatened their enterprises and stirred their anger against Muḥammad". This could have been so if his mission had already threatened the Quraysh leaders' business at Makka; and if that had happened, then there would have been no need for them to seek a recognition of the goddesses of the other places alone, nor perhaps the need for the story of the satanic verses, to explain the growth of opposition. And, as will be seen presently,[1] Watt suggests a little later that the commercial activities at Makka and the other places had become independent of the visits of tribes to the shrines. It should also be noted in this connection that Watt's theory of the Makkans' attempt at and success in bringing Ṭâ'if within the orbit of Makkan finance, as shown earlier,[2] is totally wrong.

III. WATT'S HANDLING OF THE QUR'ÂNIC PASSAGES

Next Watt attempts to show that the "view contained in the letter of 'Urwah", namely, the "mention of idols" marking a "critical stage" in the Prophet's relation with the Quraysh leaders, is confirmed by the Qur'ânic testimony. He cites three Qur'ânic passages, namely, 17:73-75 (75-77), 39:64-66 and 6:137, and says that though these passages are possibly early Madinan, "they are connected with the satanic verses and their abrogation".[3] He then refers to the promulgation of *sûrat al-Kâfirûn* (109) and remarks that it marked a "complete break with polytheism" and made "compromise impossible for the future".[4] He further observes that this *sûrah* together with

1. *Infra*, pp.734-736.
2. *Supra*, Ch. IX.
3. Watt, *M. al M.*, 107.
4. *Ibid.*

the passages 6:56 and 6:70 suggest" "that the temptation to compromise was present to Muḥammad for a considerable time". In this connection he also says that "the precise teaching of the Qur'ân about idols during the Meccan period "is to show that their worship is pointless because they are "powerless to benefit or harm a man, and in particular they do not intercede on his behalf".[1] "The Qur'ânic attack on idols is not extreme at this period", he says. Once again drawing attention to the phrase *Banât Allah* Watt says that since it implied that "the idols were roughly comparable with God", this was "chiefly denied when the satanic verses were abrogated".[2] He then concludes that the Prophet had initially sufficient success "for the heads of Quraysh to take him seriously. Pressure was brought to bear on him to make some acknowledgement of the worship at the neighbouring shrines. He was at first inclined to do so", but eventually through "Divine guidance, as he believed, he saw that this would be a fatal compromise". Hence the "rejection of polytheism was formulated in vigorous terms and closed the door to future compromise".[3]

It is thus not so much for 'Urwah's information as for Watt's own theory and the story of the satanic verses that confirmation is sought in the Qur'ân. As already noted, some narrators of the story indeed attempt to link it with some Qur'ânic passages. How and where they err in doing so have been pointed out.[4] Here we shall confine ourselves only to a consideration of Watt's analysis and interpretation.

His conclusion that because the Prophet had sufficient success at the initial stage the Quraysh leaders brought pressure to bear on him "to make some acknowledgement of the worship at the neighbouring shrines" is basically wrong. For it is plainly absurd to think that the Quraysh leaders would press for an "acknowledgement of the worship at the neighbouring shrines" if the Prophet had not already denounced idolatry and if his mission had not already posed a threat to their interests. If the Prophet had not denounced the worship of the idols at the Ka'ba, as Watt would have us believe, then there was no reason for the Quraysh leaders to think that he was against the "worship at the neighbouring shrines". The most unreasonable aspect of Watt's

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*,108.
3. *Ibid.*,108-109.
4. *Supra*, pp. 961-976.

conclusion is that while the traditional accounts and his own admission show clearly that it was the Quraysh leaders who sought a compromise, Watt now completely reverses the position and suggests that it was the Prophet, according to the Qur'ânic testimony, who was tempted to make a compromise and the temptation was present to him for a considerable time.

Watt says that in one of the Qur'ânic passages, namely, 17:75-77 (73-75) "the nature of the temptation is unspecified; in the other (39:64-66) it is definitely to acknowledge 'partners' to God. These passages also state that for Muḥammad the consequences of compromise would have been serious, eternally as well as temporally..." Another passage, 6:137, according to Watt, states that though the idolators "acknowledge God formally, in practice he is not so fully acknowledged as are the idols. That is the sort of fact which may have shown Muḥammad that the compromise would not work".[1]

Let us now consider the passages. As regards the first mentioned passage, 17:73-75, it has already been cited and considered in connection with the spurious story of the satanic verses. It need not therefore be quoted here. It would suffice if we only mention its implications. These are: (a) that the unbelievers made determined efforts to make the Prophet agree to a compromise formula by fabricating something else as God's words than what had been revealed to him; (b) that if God had not made him firm in his conviction he could have inclined towards them a little. The main emphasis of the passage is on the second point. It stresses that God protected the Prophet against the machinations of the unbelievers so that he did not even incline towards them a little. The consequences of which he is warned are intended to further steel his determination against even the slightest deviation from the right course. Contrary to this clear import of this passage Watt reads in it the presence of a "temptation" on the Prophet's part to compromise! The passage shows, however, that it was the unbelievers who attempted to make the Prophet deviate from his mission but he did not even incline towards them a little because of Allah's protection and plan.

The second passage cited by Watt, namely, 39:64-66, runs as follows:

﴿قل أفغير الله تأمرونّى أعبد أيها الجـٰهلون * ولقد أوحى إليك وإلى الذين من قبلك لـئـن أشركت ليحبطنّ عملك ولتكوننّ من الخـٰسرين * بل الله فاعبد وكن من الشّـٰكرين﴾ (٣٩ : ٦٤-٦٦)

:Say: Is it other than Allah that you ask me to worship, o you fools? And it has already been revealed to you and to those before you that if you set partners (with

1. Watt, *op.cit.,* 107.

Allah) your work shall certainly fall through and you shall be among the losers. Nay, worship Allah and be of the grateful ones." (39:64:66).

Three things are clear from the above passage. First, it is a firm rejection of a solicitaion by the unbelievers. Second, it is couched in very strong terms, characterizing the unbelievers' proposal as foolish and calling them fools on that account. Third, it states that even before that foolish proposal was made, it had already been revealed to the Prophet and to "those before him" (i.e. the previous prophets) to shun and reject idolatry and polytheism of any shade. By no stretch of the imagination could any person suggest that this passage specifies the nature of the "temptation" which is "definitely to acknowledge 'partners' to God". It is the unbelievers who, by the clear purport of the passage, were the ones who sought a compromise and attempted to make the Prophet agree to it. Their proposal was treated with such contempt that the rejection was implied in the question directed towards them. The succeeding two *'âyahs*, 65-66, are no specification of the alleged temptation. Though apparently addressed to him they are, like many such passages in the Qur'ân, addressed in fact to the Makkans and unbelievers in general through the Prophet, telling them that they had already been informed of the impropriety and evil consequences of polytheism. This is as it should have been. For the unbelievers would not have sought some sort of recognition of their gods and goddesses, as this passage and the one cited before indisputably show, unless the Prophet had turned against their worship. Here also Watt seeks to support a conclusion which is directly contradicted by the text of the passage he cites. Incidentally, this passage very clearly states that it had already been revealed to the Prophet asking him to shun all shades of setting partners with God. Thus the passage which Watt himself cites disproves his theory that before the unbelievers came forward with their proposal for a compromise no revelation condemning idol worship had been given out by the Prophet.

More inaccurate is Watt's citation of 6:137 (136) in support of his contention that because the idolaters did not acknowledge God "so fully" as they did their idols, the Prophet realized that "the compromise would not work". The obvious inconsistency in this formulation is that hitherto the theme of the Prophet's supposed 'temptation' to acknowledge the goddesses has been harped on; but here he is stated to be seeking a full recognition of God (Allah) from the unbelievers. He was indeed seeking from the unbelievers a full and true recognition of God, but the statement that he was seeking their

as full a recognition of God as their recognition of the idols is Watt's own formulation of the case. Similarly it is his own assumption that the unbelievers' not doing so led the Prophet to see that "the compromise would not work". Neither this last mentioned passage, nor the previously mentioned two, show in any way that a compromise had been made. On the contrary the first two passages demonstrate that it was the unbelievers who sought a compromise and that their offers were turned down. As regards the passage 6:136 Watt simply takes it out of its context and misconstrues it to show that the Prophet sought from the unbelievers as "full" a recognition of God as their recognition of the idols. That this is not at all the implication of the passage in question will be clear if we look at it. It runs as follows:

﴿ وجعلوا لله مما ذرأ من الحرث والأنعـٰم نصيبا فقالوا هـٰذا لله بزعمهم وهـٰذا لشركائنا فما كان لشركائهم فلا يصل إلى الله وما كان لله فهو يصل إلى شركائهم ساء ما يحكمون ﴾ (٦:١٣٦)

"And they set apart for Allah, out of what He produces of crops and cattle, a part; then they say: This is for Allah, as they fancy, and this is for our partners (idols). But what is set apart for the 'partners' does not go over to Allah; while what is set apart for Allah goes over to their partners. Bad indeed is what they adjudge". (6:136).

The passage refers to a bad custom of the unbelievers, as the succeeding *'âyah* speaks of another of their bad customs, i.e., their killing their female babes. The custom alluded to here was that the unbelievers, on the occasion of a harvest or new births of heads of cattle, used to name a larger share of the expected produce for the idols which was in fact meant for their own use, while they used to name a small share for Allah, meaning it for charitable purposes. But if for any reason the share designated for the idols fell short of it they used to make it up by taking from the share designated for Allah; but they did not act on the same principle if for any reason the share designated for Allah fell short.[1] In saying this the passage does not really insist on an equality of treatment between Allah and the 'partners'; it simply illustrates the unbelievers' folly in setting partners with Allah by pointing out that all the crops and cattle in their entirety are only Allah's giving. It is also clear from the passage, as indeed from many other passages of the Qur'ân, that the unbelievers acknowledged the existence of Allah though they foolishly set partners with Him. As will be seen presently, Watt is not quite clear about this fact and this in turn lands him in a good deal of confusion.[2]

1. See for instance Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir,* II,179.
2. See below, text.

There was no question of the Prophet's seeking an equal recognition for Allah. His whole mission was directed against the sin of setting partners with Allah.

Thus does Watt misunderstand and misconstrue the passages he cites. They do neither substantiate 'Urwah's statement that on the Prophet's denunciation of the idols a group of propertied Quraysh of Ṭâ'if came and started the movement against him, nor do they corroborate the spurious story of the satanic verses which says that the Prophet made a compromise with the idolators but subsequently set it aside. The passages cited show only a firm rejection of the unbelievers' foolish proposals for a compromise. Neither a conclusion of a compromise nor a repudiation of that supposed compromise can be proved from the passages.

Watt's other remarks in this connection may be noted in passing. He says that the promulgation of *sûrat al-Kâfirûn* marked a "complete break with polytheism" and that henceforth "the rejection of polytheism was formulated in vigorous terms." At the same time he states that the main purpose of the Qur'ânic teaching during the Makkan period was "to show that the worship of idols is pointless" and that the "attack on idols is thus not extreme at this period." Clearly the two strains are inconsistent. Watt's confusion seems to have arisen from an inadequate awareness on his part, which he admits in a subsequent work of his,[2] that before the coming of the Qur'ân the Makkan unbelievers did recognize the existence of Allah as a higher being. It is because of this inadequacy in his information that he proceeds to state: "the idolators are said to regard the objects of their worship as "intercessors" which, "if taken strictly, would imply that they recognized some higher being...."[3] The same misconception underlies his laboured interpretation that the expression *Banât Allah* meant entities "roughly comparable to God." More importantly, it is this misconception on which he bases his main assumption that initially the Prophet's belief was only a "vague monotheism" not distinguishable from that of his "more enlightened contemporeries."

IV. WATT'S VIEW OF THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL ISSUES

Concluding his discussion on the "satanic verses" and the beginning of opposition Watt observes that since the Prophet was "concerned with social,

1. Watt, *op.cit.*, 107,109.
2. Watt, *Muḥammad's Mecca,* Edinburgh,1988, Preface.
3. Watt, *M. at M.,* 108.

political and religious conditions in Mecca" and was as such "dealing with live issues his religious decisions had political implications though he treated the religious aspect as fundamental". Therefore if the stories of offers from the Quraysh leaders are correct, then the Prophet "must have been aware of the political aspects of his decisions and in particular of his promulgation of the satanic verses and of the abrogating verses." Similarly in reciting *sûrat al-Kâfirûn* he must have been aware that "there could be no peace with Quraysh unless they accepted the validity of his mission" and therefore him as Prophet and "the leading political figure", consistently with the "Arab ideas of authority and wisdom." "The mention of the goddesses is thus properly the beginning of the active opposition of Quraysh," concludes Watt, "and Sûrat al-Kâfirûn, which seems so purely religious , made it necessary for Muḥammad to conquer Mecca."[1]

It may once again be pointed out that the theory of the so-called promulgation of the satanic verses and their abrogation marking the beginning of opposition to the Prophet is totally wrong. It is based, as shown above, on a series of confusions and inconsistencies. And here Watt attempts simply to incorporate in that theory the view of Margoliouth which, as noted earlier, says that one of the reasons for the Makkans' opposition was that "political and religious leaderships could not be separated, and they were not prepared to see Mohammed at the head of the state."[2] But while Margoliouth seems to place the onus of that awareness generally on the Quraysh leaders Watt, in his turn, places it mainly on the Prophet. And in doing so he introduces further inconsistencies. If the Prophet was concerned with social, political and religious issues and was as such aware of the political implications of his religious decisions, then he must have been so aware from the beginning of his mission. Indeed he started his mission by giving out that he had been chosen by Allah as His Prophet and Messenger. That claim itself was sufficient to arouse the political susceptibilities of the Quraysh leaders. In fact the sources show that much of their theoretical objections was directed against that claim. Watt says that the Prophet was aware of the political implications of his promulgation of the "satanic verses." This means that when he supposedly promulgated the "satanic verses" he must have obtained in lieu of his recognition of "their deities" some sort of their recognition of his position. Indeed such a recognition of his position was a prerequisite as

1. *Ibid.,* 109.
2. *Supra,* pp. 716-717.

much for his according the alleged recognition to the goddesses as for their seeking that recognition; for his recognition of their deities would be of no consequence for them and they would not care to seek it unless they were aware of, and acknowledged at the same time that his pronouncement carried weight and authority. The very theory of compromise and bargain presupposes such mutual recognition of each other's claim. But Watt says in the same breath, in fact in the same sentence, that the Prophet was aware of the political implications of the abrogating verses and that he promulgated the *sûrat al-Kâfirûn* because he saw that unless the Quraysh accepted the validity of his mission, i.e., unless they accepted him as Prophet and political leader, there could be no peace with them. Does Watt mean to say that the Prophet had made the alleged compromise without obtaining any consideration for his so doing or by surrendering his claim to prophethood? Or was the alleged compromise only a dictated peace? Clearly Watt fails to see the inherent inconsistency in his contention that the Prophet was aware of the political implications of his mission both at the time of his allegedly promulgating the satanic verses and also at the time of abrogating them. In attempting to link his predecessors' view of the political reason for opposition with his interpretation of the spurious story of the satanic verses and the beginning of opposition Watt indirectly echoes the theory of ambition on the Prophet's part. That is why he once makes the Prophet make the compromise with the Quraysh leaders being aware of its political implications, and once again makes him throw that compromise to the winds because of his awareness of the political implications of his so doing, suggesting, finally, that the conquest of Makka was an inevitable consequence of that political consideration. The difference between Watt's treatment and that of his predecessors is that, while generally they make the allegation directly, Watt makes it indirectly and somewhat confusingly by tagging it with untenable theories and inconsistent statements.

V. WATT'S VIEW OF THE "MOTIVE" AND "CHIEF REASON" FOR THE OPPOSITION

The inconsistency is all the more glaring in what is said about the Quraysh leaders' "motives" and "chief reasons" for their opposition to the Prophet.[1] Watt says that the "theory of economic fears because of attack on idolatry is best forgotten" because the Makkan trade "was now independent

1. Watt, *M. at M.,* 133-136.

of the visits of nomads to the Ka'bah or other sanctuaries" and because there is no record "in the Qur'ân or elsewhere" of "any attack on the worship at the Ka'bah...., it was only subsidiary features that were altered and purified at the conquest of Mecca." "The original attack on idols", recalls Watt, "was an attack on the worship at specific shrines in the neighbourhood;" but they were "not sufficiently important for their desertion to lead to a general ruin of Meccan trade."[1]

Now, the statement that there is no record in the Qur'ân or "elsewhere", i.e., in other sources, of any attack on the worship at the Ka'ba, that is on the worship of the idols there, and that it was only subsidiary features that were altered and purified at the conquest of Makka is utterly incorrect. Only a little while ago Watt states that the promulgation of *sûrat al-Kâfirûn* meant a "complete break with polytheism" and henceforth the "rejection of polytheism was formulated in vigorous terms". No one would take this "vigorous" rejection to refer only to idolatry elsewhere in Arabia but not at Makka and the Ka'ba. True, the Ka'ba is not mentioned specifically in connection with the denunciation of idolatry in the Qur'ân; but then the shrines at the other places also are not mentioned by name. And so far as "elsewhere", i.e., the other sources are concerned the reports are replete with references to attacks on the idols at the Ka'ba. Even the reports of Al-Zuhrî and 'Urwah which Watt himself quotes speak of uncompromising attacks on idolatry. Moreover, it is well known that on the conquest of Makka the idols at the Ka'ba were removed and destroyed. Thus it is only by ignoring the undisputed facts that one can hazard such a blatantly incorrect statement that it was only "subsidiary features" of the worship at the Ka'ba "that were altered and purified at the conquest of Mecca".

Secondly, by saying that the Makkan trade was independent of the visits of the Arabs "to the Ka'bah or other sanctuaries" and that those other sanctuaries were in any case not sufficiently important for their desertion to lead to a general ruin of the Makkan trade Watt here directly contradicts his earlier theory that the "removal of recognition from the shrines of al-Lât [at Ṭâ'if] must somehow or other have threatened the Quraysh leaders' enterprises and stirred their anger against Muḥammad". Watt seems to recognize the inconsistency. Hence he hastens to add that it "is almost certainly true" that "those particular individuals who had trade connections with the par-

1. *Ibid.,* 134.

ticular shrines involved in that attack were extremely annoyed" and that there were likewise other groups "whose special interests were adversely affected by some point" of the Prophet's teaching.[1]

Of course there were "other groups" whose sepcial interests were threatened by the Prophet's teachings; but that is not the same thing as the theory advanced earlier by Watt. It is not explained why the annoyance of the "particular individuals who had trade connections with the particular shrines involved in the attack" should have led to a general and organized opposition of all the Quraysh leaders, specially when it is emphasized that those particular shrines were in any case not sufficiently important for their desertion to lead to a general ruin of Makkan trade. It is also not understandable why even the so-called particular individuals should have been annoyed if, as it is very emphatically asserted, that the Makkans' trade "was now independent of the visits of nomads to the Ka'bah or other shrines". In fact this statement about the "particular individuals" and the "other groups" is only a poor attempt on Watt's part to escape from the inconsistency between his previous and present suggestions. These latter very clearly contradict the theory so laboriously built up earlier that the "withdrawal of recognition" from the other shrines led to the beginning of the general opposition of the Quraysh leaders as a whole.

A further effectual admission of the weakness and untenability of his earlier theory lies in what Watt finally says about the "chief reasons for opposition" which he now says were political. Once again reflecting Margoliouth's view Watt here says that the Quraysh leaders "saw that Muḥammad's claim to be a Prophet, if taken seriously, had political implications"; for according to the Arab notion "rule in the tribe or clan should go to him who had most wisdom".[2] If the Quraysh leaders believed "Muḥammad's warning", argues Watt, "and then wanted to know how to order their affairs in the light of it, who could be the best person to counsel them if not Muḥammad?" Watt adds that the Quraysh leaders also recognized "the opposition between the ethics of the Qur'ân" and their mercantile activities. And since "from the very first there was criticism of their individualistic attitude to wealth" they might have felt that "these ethical ideas would gain Muḥammad much political support". Some might even have "felt that this was a reopening of the old

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*, 134-135.

dispute about policy between Makhzûm with its friends and the Ḥilf al-Fuḍûl".[1]

Thus does Watt finally link up the "chief reason for opposition" with his favourite theory of commercial and political rivalry between the *Aḥlâf* and the *Ḥilf al-Fuḍûl* groups of Quraysh. The untenability of that theory of acute commercial rivalry between the two groups of Quraysh, and of Watt's further suggestion in that connection that the Prophet in his youth had been ousted from the most profitable commercial operations has already been pointed out.[2] It has also been shown that some of the Quraysh leaders viewed the rise of the Prophet in the light of the inter-clan rivalry for leadership and further that the Prophet's mission cannot be explained in terms of that inter-clan rivalry; nor was he actuated by that sort of considerations.[3] Watt's, and indeed the orientalists' explanation of the material factors underlying the rise of Islam and the Quraysh's opposition to it is more or less an adaptation and elaboration of that unreasonable view of some of the Quraysh leaders. Without entering into that question again, we would simply point out here that these last mentioned statements of Watt effectively nullify his earlier theory about the beginning of opposition.

Watt here recognizes that the Prophet's mission was started with a claim to prophethood which, it is further recognized, had political implications that could not have been missed by the Quraysh leaders, nor did they miss them. Watt also recognizes here, as he indeed emphasizes it in his treatment of the primary message of the Qur'ân, that the warning about the life in the hereafter and about the Day of Judgement in particular, and the invectives against the Quraysh leaders "individualistic" and selfish attitude to wealth had been present in the Qur'ânic revelations since the very beginning. Thus by Watt's own admission the "chief reasons" which he now says determined the Quraysh leaders' attitude had been there since the inception of the Prophet's mission. There is thus no need to wait for the dubious incident of the "satanic verses" which is said to constitute a compromise and an acknowledgement of the goddesses at some other shrines, and the supposed abrogation of those verses which is said to constitute a unilateral rejection of that compromise by the Prophet and his withdrawal of recognition from the

1. *Ibid.,* 135.
2. *Supra,* Chap. IX; also pp. 236-237.
3. *Supra,* Ch. XXIV,and pp. 618-619.

other shrines only, to explain the beginning of opposition. That theory and Watt's present identification of the "motives" and "chief reasons for opposition" are antithetical.

As already pointed out, by the very implications of the warning about the Day of Judgement and by the text of the early Qur'ânic passages, the Quraysh leaders were asked to abandon the worship of idols and to adhere strictly to the principle of monotheism. Thus 'Urwah's, Al-Zuhrî's and Ibn Isḥâq's statements that the "mention", that is the denunciation, of the idols marked the beginning of opposition are substantially correct. These statements of theirs have reference to the beginning of open and public preachings on the one hand, and the growth of organized opposition on the other. 'Urwah's statement that some propertied men of Ṭâ'if came to organize the opposition to the Prophet might have been an incident in connection with that organized opposition, or it might have reference to persons like 'Utbah and Shaybah, sons of Rabî'ah, who had landed properties at Ṭâ'if and who were prominent leaders of the opposition to the Prophet. In any case, none of the above mentioned authorities implies that the "mention of idols" had reference to the so-called satanic verses and their abrogation. Watt gets hold of the spurious story and links it up with the "mention of idols" against the clear statements of the authorities, including 'Urwah, in order to justify, on the one hand, the alleged story of the satanic verses itself and, on the other, his own wrong assumption that the Prophet's initial teaching consisted of a vague and nebulous monotheism not inconsistent with toleration of the goddesses! In fact it is to sustain this latter view, which he has taken over from Bell, that Watt uses 'Urwah's report instead of Ibn Isḥâq's statement regarding the beginning of opposition and links up the expression "mention of idols" with the spurious story of the satanic verses, suggesting finally that the alleged "abrogation" of those verses meant only a denunciation of the worship of the idols at Ṭâ'if and other shrines only! But as shown above, this theory of the Prophet's initial belief being only a vague monotheism, of the Quraysh leaders' nonetheless seeking a recognition of the idols at the other shrines, though the Prophet had not supposedly as yet denounced the idols at the Ka'ba, and of their turning against him only because he had withdrawn his recognition of the idols of those other places, and that too when the desertion of the other shrines was not likely to affect Makkan trade, etc., is manifestly an absurd proposition involving a good deal of contradictions and inconsistencies.

In winding up his discussions on the chief reasons and motives of opposition Watt finally states that by "placing these grounds of opposition", that is, the apprehensions of the Quraysh leaders about their political and economic position, "in the forefront", he does "not imply that the Qur'ânic attack on idolatry met no resistance".[1] He explains that the Quraysh leaders had no "theoretical defence of paganism to offer", but they were actuated mainly by their inherent conservatism, their adherence to "the way of their fathers" and their consequent dislike of "innovation". Hence they were particularly stirred by the assertion that their ancestors were in hell.[2] Watt further says that although some of the Quraysh leaders were "thorough-going individualists", the others were "more conservative" and "retained a certain group loyalty". These latter, according to Watt, saw "in the tendency of Islam to cause sharp divisions within the family" a movement to undermine "the whole social structure". "Indeed", stresses Watt, "in a sense it was doing so". He concludes by saying that the "malaise" confronting the Prophet "had social, economic, political and intellectual" symptoms. Hence, though his message "was essentially religious", it necessarily "affected the other aspects, and consequently the oppostion had many facets".[3]

Of course the causes and nature of the unbelievers' opposition to the Prophet, as noted earlier,[4] were multi-faceted, social, religious, political and economic. This fact once again emphasizes the unreasonableness of linking the beginning and growth of opposition mainly or essentially with the spurious story of the satanic verses according to which, as Watt suggests, the Quraysh leaders sought only a recognition of the idols at the other shrines and their anger was excited because that recognition was withdrawn! Anyway, Watt here says that he does "not imply that the Qur'ânic attack on idolatry met no resistance". What does he mean here by this "Qur'ânic attack on idolatry? Does he mean to say its attack only on the acknowledgedly unimportant shrines and their idols outside Makka, or its attack on idolatry in general, which stirred the conservativeness of the Quraysh leaders and their "piety towards ancestors"? Clearly Watt's implication is the latter. Hence this statement of his runs counter to what he states on his previous

1. Watt, *M. at M.,* 135.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.,* 136.
4. *Supra,* Ch. XXV.

page that there "is no record of any attack on the worship at the Ka'ba in the Qur'ân or elsehwere". He is also unclear about the meaning of the expresion "way of the fathers". This expression, which the Qur'ân shows the unbelievers often used in opposing the Prophet, does not simply signify their "conservatism" or their piety towards ancestors or their mere dislike of "innovation". It means more specifically the religion and way of worship of their fathers which is what the Quraysh leaders sought to uphold. They were not simply signifying their loyalty to their ancestors; they were really invoking the authority of their forefathers in support of their idol worship. After all, they did not believe in the hereafter and the Day of Judgement; so the statement that their ancestors were in hell could, in its plain sense, scarcely have stirred them to the depth.

Secondly, Watt says here that though "some" of the Quraysh leaders were "thorough-going individualists", the others were still wedded to the ideal of group loyalty and therefore saw in Islam a movement aimed at breaking up families and "undermining the whole social structure". We do not like to discuss the merit of this latter statement here. What is necessary and relevant to point out here is that earlier Watt has attempted to show that there was a considerable growth of individualism and consequently a decline in social solidarity which paved the way for introducing a new concept of social solidarity through religion. But here Watt would have us believe that only "some" persons were thorough-going individualists and the general body of the Quraysh were conservatives and attached to the ideal of group loyalty. "The Arabs were", he emphasizes here, "by nature or nurture conservatives".[1] And it was this inherent conservatism, reminds us Watt, this "reverence to tradition", which lay at the root of their opposition to the "innovation" of Islam. Clearly Watt here negatives what he has said earlier about the growth of individualism and the consequent break-up of social solidarity. Here he admits indirectly that the individualism of which he speaks earlier was in reality no effectual factor in social relationship of the time. Again, it is said here that Islam was breaking up families and undermining the social structure; but earlier it has been suggested that the break-up of social solidarity and the traditional system of security consequent upon the growth of individualism made room for the rise of Islam. Thus what has been stated earlier as the cause and background, is now stated to be the

1. Watt, *M. at M.*, p. 135.

effect and consequence. Clearly his treatment of the subject is both confusing and inconsistent.

To sum up, Watt's theory about the beginning of opposition, particularly his linking of 'Urwah's statement about the "mention of idols" with the spurious story of the satanic verses is untenable because:

(i) The premise that the Prophet's initial belief consisted of a vague monotheism tolerating the worship of the gods and goddesses is incorrect, based as it is (a) on an inadequate awareness of the fact that even before the Prophet's appearance the concept of Allah as the Creator and Supreme Lord had been prevalent among the Arabs; and (b) on a faulty selection and interpretation of the early passages of the Qur'ân.

(ii) The theory goes against the rationale of even the alleged story of the satanic verses itself. For, according to all the versions of the story, the so-called compromise between the Quraysh leaders and the Prophet took place *after* the growth of opposition to him and *not* before it.

(iii) The theory is also simply illogical because neither would the Quraysh leaders have sought an acknowledgement of their or others' deities nor would the Prophet have struck a bargain by doing so before he had denounced those deities.

(iv) The explanation that some Quraysh leaders of Makka who had trade connections with Ṭâ'if sought recognition of the deities at that place and at two other shrines, and that it was they who, after the Prophet's withdrawal of that recognition from those deities, started the opposition against him, is similarly illogical; for it is not explained how the supposed withdrawal of recognition from those deities would affect the Quraysh leaders' commercial interests at those places if no such adverse effect, consequent upon a non-recognition of the idols, had as yet been experienced at Makka. After all, the trading activities neither at Makka nor at the other places had begun only after the Prophet's recognition of the idols there!

(v) The theory is also inconsistent with Watt's other statement that the Makkan trade had become independent of the visits of nomads to the Ka'ba and the other shrines.

(vi) It is also inconsistent with what is finally stated as the "chief reason" and motive behind the Makkan opposition, namely, the political implications of the claim to prophethood and the attack on the Quraysh leaders' individualistic and selfish attitude to wealth. For, by Watt's own admission,

these chief reasons had been there since the beginning of the Prophet's mission and these could have occasioned their opposition irrespective of the question of the recognition or non-recognition of the gods and goddesses.

(vii) The theory is contrary to the texts of 'Urwah, Al-Zuhrî and Ibn Isḥâq, all of whom, while saying that the "mention of idols" was the cause of opposition, refer to the beginning of open and public preaching by the Prophet on the one hand, and to the growth of organized opposition to him, on the other. None of them connects this "mention of idols" with the spurious story of the satanic verses.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE ORIENTALISTS ON THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF THE OPPOSITION

I. MUIR'S AND MARGOLIOUTH'S VIEWS

As regards the extent and nature of the Makkan opposition the views of Muir are more less in accord with the sources, though he belittles the attempts of the Quraysh to put an end to the Prophet's life. He says that the persecution grew hot by degrees and that those who were "citizens", i.e., members of clans and their confederates, escaped serious injury for the most part, "being protected as a point of honour by their families; but the slaves, who had no such support, were exposed to much suffering".[1] Adopting Ibn Isḥâq's view Muir further says that it took some time, "three or four years" of the Prophet's mission before any general opposition to him was organized; but hostility once "excited, soon showed itself in acts of violence".[2] As time went on, and with the continued success of Islam, further observes Muir, the jealousy and enmity of the Quraysh were aggravated and the brunt of their wrath fell upon the converted slaves and strangers. He cites some instances of persecution, particularly those upon Bilâl and 'Ammâr. Referring to the latter he adds that the Prophet, "under these trying circumstances", even permitted the persecuted individuals "to dissemble", in order that they might escape the torment.[3] That the Prophet and other members of important clans escaped serious physical assault was due to the institution of clan solidarity. In this connection Muir observes that when the men of Banû Makhzûm determined to chastize the converts of their own clan, particularly Al-Walîd ibn al-Walîd, "son of their aged chief, they repaired to his brother Hishâm, a violent oppressor of the Prophet, and demanded his permission; this he readily gave, but added: 'Beware of killing him; for if you do, verily I shall slay in his stead the chiefest among you".[4]

Thus Muir stresses mainly three things. He says that persecution and physical assaults came mainly on slaves and persons having no strong family or clan connection. Second, it was the institution of clan solidarity, i.e., the

1. Muir, *op.cit.*, 61.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, 66.
4. *Ibid.*, 67.

duty of every clan to protect and defend its members against attacks and assaults by others, which was the main reason for converts of family and clan connection generally escaping serious persecution and physical harm. Third, Muir says that persecution upon slaves and humbler converts was sometimes so severe that the Prophet, in at least one instance, allowed the convert to "dissemble", i.e., to feign renunciation of Islam, in order to escape further persecution. In all these Muir is apparently correct; but he does not emphasize that just as the institution of clan solidarity worked in favour of protecting an individual, so it did in respect of persecution too. Even the slaves and confederates who were subjected to inhuman torture were done so by their respective masters or with their permission. Even the instance of Al-Walîd ibn al-Walîd which Muir cites to illustrate the point of clan solidarity really demonstrates the case of a convert of a respectable family being persecuted by the members of his clan with the permission of his family. It also shows that the type of persecution which was usually inflicted on converts was likely to cause the death of the victim. That is why Hishâm warned his clansmen to avoid going to such excesses. But that does not mean that the persecution which was generally inflicted upon converts of family and position was not severe and inhuman. The Prophet was of course protected by his clan; but that was not the case with most of the converts of family and clan.

In general Margoliouth follows Muir in all the three points made by him. Thus Margoliouth says that against the "humbler followers of the new doctrine violence was speedily put in motion; to increase, as time went, to burning with hot irons, or exposure face upwards to the midday sun;... Even strangers visiting Mecca who enquired after the Prophet were subjected to violence".[1] He adds that on account of such persecution five persons recanted and returned to paganism, while others, with the Prophet's approval, denied their faiths "with their lips, while believing in their heart".[2] This last remark of Margoliouth's is clearly an echo of what Muir says about the Prophet's allowing some of his converts to "dissemble" in order to escape further persecution. Like Muir, again, Margoliouth stresses that the "wealthy and powerful" converts generally escaped violence because of "that institution of paganism which made the ties of clan and family more powerful than

1. Margoliouth, *op.cit.,* 121-122.
2. Ibid., 122, citing Ya'qûbî, II, 28 and Ibn Sa'd, II,178.

any moral law".[1] The Prophet himself was protected by his clan, says Margoliouth, particularly by 'Âbû Ṭâlib, who undertook to protect him "from the fury of the orthodox, not without their approval".[2] In this connection Margoliouth remarks, somewhat regretfully, that had not the Makkan community been so tenacious "of the cult of clan, so timid of the consequences which arise from the shedding of kindred blood", and had the head of the Prophet's clan "let him be outlawed, then Mecca might have been rid of him, but Abu Ṭalib could not be persuaded to do this, and his veto blocked the way".[3]

Having thus agreed with Muir, Margoliouth strikes three new notes. He attempts to find, besides the clan spirit, 'Abû Ṭâlib's reasons for the role he played and remarks: "Perhaps Abu Ṭalib and his numerous family could not afford to abandon their wealthy relative, and, indeed, had Mohammed not had some power over his uncle, it is unlikely that the latter would have submitted to the inconvenience which his nephew's mission brought on him".[4] Second, Margoliouth suggests that since the Prophet was thus protected by his uncle and clan, the war between him and the Makkans was for a long time — eight or ten years — one of words. It was, "in the main, the history of a debate in which the speeches of the counsel of one side only are preserved".[5] And third, Margoliouth says that the Prophet's followers, according to the usual tendency of every new movement, became "aggressive" and endeavoured to interfere with the worship which they regarded as improper and this caused much trouble.[6]

As regards his first conjecture Margoliouth does not elaborate it. It is, however, difficult to attribute selfish motives to 'Abû Ṭâlib in his action of protecting the Prophet all through. Whatever might have been the case at the early stage of his mission, at the later stage, particularly during the period of the boycott and blockade, 'Abû Ṭâlib could not be said to have acted in the hope of material assistance for his numerous family from the Prophet's resources. Nor could the entire clan of Banû Hâshim and Banû al-Muṭṭalib have been persuaded to stand by 'Abû Ṭâlib's policy if he was seen to have acted out of self interest. In this connection it is well worth noting Muir's remarks about 'Abû Ṭâlib's character. He says: "The sacrifices to which Abu Talib exposed himself and his family for the sake of his nephew, while

1. Margoliouth, *op.cit.*, 122. 2. *Ibid.* 3. *Ibid.*, 123.
4. *Ibid.* 5. *Ibid.*, 123 and 125. 6. *Ibid.*, 125.

yet incredulous of his mission, stamp his character as singularly noble and unselfish. They afford at the same time strong proof of the sincerity of Mahomet. Abu Talib would not have acted thus for an interested deceiver; and he had ample means of scrutiny".[1]

As regards Margoliouth's second statement that the war between the Prophet and the Makkans was mainly one of words, it would be examined shortly[2] in connection with the orientalists' attitude towards the Makkan unbelievers' objections and arguments.

Regarding his third allegation, that of aggressiveness on the part of the new Muslims, Margoliouth says that the Qur'ân praises the iconoclastic conduct of Abraham and, since the early Madinan converts acted in the same style, "it is probable that the Makkan converts had set the example. Violent scenes were certain to be the result of such actions".[3] Margoliouth further suggests that the rules on the subject of food were also aimed at irritating the unbelievers; for, as the regulations, particularly the ban on partaking of meat offered to idols, rendered it "impossible for a Moslem to join in the meals of most of his countrymen... we can conjecture with ease the indignation with which this idea of purity was viewed by those whose conduct was impugned by it".[4]

This allegation of aggressiveness on the part of the Prophet's followers which, according to Margoliouth, was bound to result in violent scenes, is totally unjustified. The sources do not furnish a single instance of any violent scene having occurred on account of the alleged aggressiveness and iconoclastic zeal of the early Makkan Muslims. On the contrary it was the Quraysh leaders who appear from all the accounts to have adopted an aggressive attitude and whose interference with the Muslims' prayer in a secluded place occasioned the first recorded violent scene.[5] And that was only natural; for aggressiveness arises from a consciousness of one's own strength, however misconceived, and a corresponding notion of weakness of one's adversary, however mistaken that notion might have been. There is no evidence in the sources to suggest that the early Makkan converts were ani-

1. Muir, *op.cit.,* third edn., 103.
2. *Infra,* p.763 ff.
3. Margoliouth, *op.cit.,* 126.
4. *Ibid.,* 126-127.
5. *Supra,* pp. 652-653.

mated by such misconceptions. As regards the instance of Prophet Abraham, the Qur'ân cites it to emphasize the doctrine of monotheism, not to incite the new converts to undertake such feats. Also the instance which Margoliouth cites elsewhere of the Prophet and 'Alî together breaking the idols at the Ka'ba has reference to what happened after the conquest of Makka, not to the initial stage of the mission. Similarly misleading is the reference to the food regulations. The refusal to partake of meat offered to idols was a requisite of monotheism, not at all an expression of aggressiveness towards the unbelievers. Even previously to the appearance of the Prophet some of the *ḥanîfs* are known to have discountenanced such meals. Neither their actions nor those of the early Muslims, however, occasioned any ill-will between them and the unbelievers.

In his above mentioned views, Margoliouth seems to have reflected two tendencies that gained ground among the orientalists in general by the beginning of the twentieth century. These were to identify the nature and extent of the Makkan opposition by considering the references to it in the Qur'ân and, on that basis to suggest that the persecution of the Muslims was generally mild and that the opposition consisted mainly of a debate. Indeed writing about the same time as Margoliouth did, Leo Caetani, after referring to various passages of the Qur'ân, made these very suggestions.[1] The lines thus laid down were followed more or less by subsequent writers, particulary by Watt, as will be seen presently.

II. WATT'S VIEWS: (A) PERSECUTION OF MUSLIMS

Watt discusses the Makkan opposition mainly under three sub-headings: (a) Persecution of Muslims, (b) Pressure upon Banû Hâshim and (c) Offers of compromise to the Prophet. The first of these is considered in the present section.

Watt starts his discussion about the persecution of Muslims by quoting in his own translation Ibn Isḥâq's statement about 'Abû Jahl's role and says on that basis that the persecution of the Muslims consisted of (a) verbal attacks on influential persons; (b) economic pressure upon "lesser men" and (c) "bodily violence towards those without any influential backing".[2] Elaborating this statement Watt says that as "most" of the Quraysh clans were "sufficiently strong" and attached to the clan spirit to deal effectively with

1. Leo Caetani, *Ann*, I, 244 ff.
2. Watt, *M. at M.*, 117-118.

"anyone who maltreated a clansman or confederate, those exposed to physical violence were very few and comprised slaves and persons without any clear clan connexion". Clansmen and confederates could be disowned, points out Watt, as happened to 'Abû Bakr when he accepted Ibn al-Dughunnah's protection, or to the Prophet when he went to Ṭâ'if, but such action "tended to lower the clan's honour".[1]

It is not necessary to point out how closely Watt here follows his predecessors in stressing the function of clan solidarity. Both Muir and Margoliouth also speak about the sense of honour involved in protecting one's clansmen.

Continuing, Watt further says that when the sources speak of "the seduction or trial (*fitnah, yuftinu*) to which Muslims were subjected", they mean actions like those of 'Abû Jahl. "This is not, however, severe persecution". In this connection he blames "westren scholars" for accusing the sources of exaggeration and stresses that "a study of the details in Ibn Hishâm, aṭ-Ṭabarî and Ibn Sa'd's biographies" goes "to suggest that the persecution was slight" and that the Western scholars' accusations "hardly apply to the earliest sources".[2]

As instances of the three above mentioned types of persecution Watt says that the Prophet "was attacked verbally and subjected to minor insults", though "the unpleasantness possibly increased after the death of 'Abû Ṭâlib".[3] The reduction of 'Abû Bakr's capital from 40,000 to 5,000 *dirhams* at the time of his migration to Madina is considered by Watt to have been "probably mostly due to economic pressure such as 'Abû Jahl threatened, and not the purchase of slaves, as stated in Ibn Sa'd, since a slave cost only about 400 dirhams".[4] As regards the third category, that of bodily violence, Watt thinks the "most notable examples" were the sufferings of slaves like Bilâl and 'Âmir ibn Fuhayrah. He adds a fourth category here, namely, "the application of pressure (including physical) to members even of influential clans and families by fathers, uncles and brothers". The instances of persecution of Al-Walîd ibn al-Walîd, Salamah ibn Hishâm, 'Ayyâsh ibn Abî Rabî'ah and the "manhandling of the confederate 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir and his

1. *Ibid.,* 118.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*

family by B. Makhzûm" are placed by Watt in this category.[1] He winds up his statements on this topic by once again emphasizing that the system of security prevailing in Makka — the protection by each clan of its members — "meant that a Muslim could not be seriously molested by a member of another clan, even though his clan had no liking for Islam", and that therefore persecution was limited to "(a) cases where clan relationships were not affected" and (b) actions, such as economic pressure and minor insults, that did not contravene the traditional code of honour or they affected "only the individual and not his clan."[2]

Before passing on to Watt's statements about pressure on Banû Hâshim it would be worthwhile to look a little closely into his above-mentioned analysis of *Persecution of Muslims*. The first thing to note is that here in effect he contradicts and nullifies his earlier thesis about the weakening or break-up of of what he calls "social", i.e., clan solidarity and the growth of individualism which, according to him, paved the way for finding an alternative system of security in religion and which accounts for the rise of Islam. Here he is forced to recognize that far from there being any noticeable slackening of clan solidarity, it was as strong as ever and that this was the main reason for the Quraysh leaders' failure to stop the Prophet and the Muslims. Even those whom he earlier identified as thorough individualists engaging themselves in "high finance" and business partnerships running across clan and family circles are now recognized to be very much wedded to the traditional system of security and social solidarity which prevented them from dealing effectively with the Prophet and the Muslims of their respective clans. Thus, far from the supposed lack of clan solidarity lying at the root of the rise of Islam, as Watt states earlier, it was the unabated strength of the age-old clan spirit which, by Watt's recognition, was the main reason for the Quraysh leaders' failure and, conversely, for the survival and growth of Islam at Makka. It was thus not that Islam rose because the pagan institution of clan solidarity had become sick and moribund, but that paganism itself contained in its bosom the germs of its own death.

A second noteworthy aspect in Watt's analysis is that he regards the western scholars' accusation of exaggeration on the part of the early Muslim chroniclers as unjustified. Apparently, thus, he differs from the other wes-

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*, 119.

tern scholars; but in reality he aims at the same thing as they do. They allege exaggeration on the part of the Muslim historians in order to show that the persecution of the Muslims was not so severe as it is stated to be. Watt aims at the same thing; but he does so by attempting to show that the earliest sources do suggest that "the persecution was slight". The truth is that, while the Western scholars whom he castigates err in one direction, that of unjustifiably accusing the sources of exaggeration, Watt himself appears to err in the other direction, that of belittling the facts recorded by the sources. If one looks at the sources impartially one would not fail to see that the facts recorded by them do in fact give a picture of severe persecution. It was by no means "slight" or "mostly of a mild nature", as Watt would have us believe. He is also not quite correct in suggesting that the expressions *fitnah/ yuftinu* signified sundry annoyances and economic pressure upon "lesser men". The clear signification of the expressions was the attempt of the Quraysh leaders, by hook or by crook, to make the Muslims recant. And no slight or mild pressure could conceivably serve the purpose!

Thirdly, like Muir and Margoliouth, Watt labours under the same misconception that since persecution was limited to cases where clan relationships were not affected or did not contravene the norm and traditional code of honour, it was "slight" or mostly mild in nature. As already pointed out, persecution of the Muslims almost invariably followed clan lines. Even slaves were persecuted by their masters or with their leave. It was not that members of one clan proceeded to persecute the Muslims of another clan. The clans themselves decided to deal with their respective "renegades". In fact Watt's identification of a fourth category of cases of persecution, that of "application of pressure (including physical) to members even of influential clans and families by fathers, uncles and elder brothers" is superfluous and is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of things. In any event, it is basically wrong to suggest that since persecution was limited to cases where clan relationships were not affected, i.e., where members of the clan punished its own members and to cases that did not contravene the traditional norm and code of honour, it was necessarily slight or mild. War does not cease to be terrible and destructive because it is waged in accordance with "customary" and "conventional" laws of warfare; nor is persecution necessarily slight or mild because it is inflicted on its own members by a recognized institution, such as a tribe, a goverment or any other formally constituted organization. Nor does persecution cease to be inhuman because it is inflicted on slaves or

persons of no family or clan connexion. When the Quraysh leaders beat to death Ḥârith ibn 'Abî Hâlah in the precint of the Ka'ba itself[1] because of his supporting the Prophet, that action does not appear to have been considered by them contrary to their norm or code of conduct. Nor was the torturing to death of Yâsir, his wife Sumayyah and their son 'Abd Allah regarded any the more outside the norm of the Quraysh leaders. When Al-Walîd ibn al-Walîd was given over by his family to their clansmen to make him recant by any means short of putting him to death, the persecution upon him was not conceivably only slight or mild; for severity in persecution does not necessarily start with first putting the victim to death. When the Quraysh leaders publicly resolved to kill the Prophet, making no secret of their resolution, it was no light matter, nor was their hostility only of a mild nature. Nor did they stop simply at resolving; they made several attempts, in all technical sense of the term, to carry out their resolution in practice. Nor did the Quraysh leaders remain within the bounds of their norm and traditional code of conduct. Disowning a clansman was an abnormal and dishonourable act to them, as Watt recognizes. They did even that. Not simply 'Abû Bakr and the Prophet, but a whole host of others were disowned, excommunicated and put out of the pale of the clan security system, to be assaulted and killed with impunity by any hostile person or group of persons. In the then Arabian situation nothing could be a more extreme and untraditional step than this measure of making a whole group "stateless" and "unpersons" and exposing them to all imaginable dangers. It was this situation which compelled a considerable number of the converts to seek shelter and security in a foreign land. Even the whole clan of Banû Hâshim (with Banû al-Muṭṭalib) were excommunicated, boycotted and economically blockaded by all the other Quraysh clans for the sole purpose of procuring the surrender of the person of the Prophet to them for their seeing an end of him. In adopting this measure the Quraysh clans flouted another time-honoured Arab custom, that of helping and protecting a blood relation, *ṣilat raḥim*. And when after 'Abû Ṭâlib's death Banû Hâshim withdrew its protection from the Prophet, he had to seek shelter and support from the neighbouring town of Ṭâ'if where, far from being put to mild pressure, he was seriously assaulted and manhandled. If all these were only instances of "slight" and "mild" persecution and hostility, then the standard of severity with which these have been judged must be terribly high indeed!

1. *Supra*, p. 528.

Watt considers the Qur'ânic evidence on the subject a little later on[1] and says that it confirms in general the picture derived "from the traditional historical material", namely, "that the persecution of the Muslims was mild and did not include any acts strictly forbidden by custom".[2] He also says that verbal criticisms and disputations were the "chief feature of the opposition" and that the principal hostile activity as described in the Qur'ân was *kayd* and *makr* which, though they might "have led potentially to disaster", were "always within the letter of the law".[3] Therefore, emphasizes Watt, "there is no evidence for any severe persecution or anything that could be called oppression".[4] In this connection Watt refers particularly to the Madinan passage 16:110 (according to Watt 16:111) which speaks of the Muslims as having migrated to Madina after they had been, in Watt's words, "tried or tested (*futinû*)" which "need not imply anything more than *kayd*, together with family pressure".[5] He also refers to another passage, 85:1-7, and says that the story of the men of the trench" (*'ukhdûd*) related therein, though it might "reflect persecution at Mecca", Western scholars are inclined to regard it as a description of hell and that "by itself the passage cannot be taken as evidence of the persecution of the Muslims".[6]

Now, in saying that the Qur'ânic evidence suggests that the persecution of the Muslims was mild and that the chief feature of the opposition was disputation and verbal criticisms Watt merely reiterates the theses of his predecessors, particularly of Margoliouth and Leo Caetani. That aspect of the orientalists' views, as already indicated, would be taken up in the following chapter. Here it may once again be pointed out that Watt is not quite right in saying that *futinû*, which he translates as "tried", did not imply "anything more than *kayd* together with family pressure". The word *fitnah* or *futinû* is a comprehensive expression meaning, among other things, all sorts of manoeouvres and attempts, including persecution and physical assaults, adopted by the unbelievers to make the converts to Islam recant and deviate from the new faith. Obviously those attempts of the unbelievers were not limited to

1. *Ibid.*, 123-133.
2. *Ibid.*, 123.
3. *Ibid.*, 133.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Ibid., 132. The passage runs as follows:

﴿ثمّ إن ربّك للّذين هاجروا من بعد ما فتنوا ثمّ جـٰهدوا وصبروا إنّ ربّك من بعدها لغفور رّحيم﴾ (١٦ : ١١٠)

6. *Ibid.*

what is called *kayd* and family pressure. Similarly the statement that *kayd* and *makr* were always "within the letter of the law" is misleading. This latter expression is a modern phrase which is often employed to justify or condone an act or conduct. The plain meanings of the terms are plotting, deceit, artful machinations, trickery and the like. These refer only to the manner in which an adverse act is performed, not to the nature of the act itself, far less to its severity or intensity. Deceit, trickery and artful machinations were as much "within the letter of the law" in the sphere of tribal conflicts and hostilities as they are in the domain of modern warfare and hostilities. But that fact does not determine the severity or inhumanity of the act commited. Neither an act which may be described as trickery or deceit is necessarily mild and not severe, nor is a measure which might be within the letter of the law always mild and not severe. Putting a man to death may be perfectly within the letter of the law; but none would suggest that it is a mild and slight measure. Indeed it is manifestly a misleading statement to say that because what the unbelievers did towards the Muslims was according to the pagan law and customs, it was not severe and did not constitute "oppression".

Nor is the statement correct that the Qur'ân simply speaks of *kayd* and *makr* without specifying the nature of the plots or of the acts they committed or planned to commit. Look for instance at the following passages:

(1) 59:8 — ﴿للفقراء المهـٰجرين الّذين أخرجوا من ديـٰرهم وأموٰلهم...﴾

"For those indigent *muhâjirs* who were driven out of their homes and properties..."

(2) 16:41 — ﴿والّذين هاجروا فى الله من بعد ما ظلموا...﴾

"And those who migrated for Allah's sake after what they had suffered of oppression..."

(3) 3:195 — ﴿... فالّذين هاجروا وأخرجوا من ديـٰرهم وأوذوا فى سبيلى...﴾

"... So those who migrated and were driven out of their homes and were persecuted in My cause..."

(4) 8:30 — ﴿وإذ يمكر بك الّذين كفروا ليثبتوك أو يقتلوك أو يخرجوك...﴾

"And remember (O Prophet) how the unbelievers plotted against you, to incarcerate you, or to assassinate you or to deport you..."

(5) 22:39-40 —

﴿أذن للّذين يقـٰتـَلون بأنهم ظلموا... الّذين أخرجوا من ديـٰرهم بغير حق إلّا أن يقولوا ربنا الله...﴾

"Permission is given to those who are being fought with (to fight back), because they have been wronged... those who have been driven out of their homes without a

just cause except that they say: 'Our Lord is Allah...'"

It should be clear from the few passages quoted above, to none of which Watt thinks it necessary to refer, that (a) the Muslims were driven out of their homes and properties; (b) that they were oppressed (*ẓulimû*) and persecuted (*'ûdhû*) and (c) that the unbelievers conspired to arrest and keep the Prophet confined or to assassinate him or to deport him. It is presumably to this conspiracy that Watt indirectly refers by saying that the *kayd* and *makr*, though potentially disastrous, did not contravene the recognized norm and customs of the pagans. Of course their planned assassination of the Prophet, if carried out, would have been disastrous; but the failure of that plot does not mean that the Qur'ânic evidence only indicated mild opposition and family pressure upon the Muslims and not "oppression" as such. Indeed what Watt states or suggests to be the purport of the Qur'ânic evidence is roundly contradicted by the Qur'ân itself. Thus while he suggests that the Qur'ân does not specify the acts of oppression and violence upon the Muslims, the Qur'ân very clearly says that they were oppressed, "persecuted" and even driven out of their homes and properties. Watt says that what the unbelievers did towards the Muslims was in accordance with the laws and customs of the pagan Arabs. The Qur'ân categorically characterizes their conduct as "oppression" and injustice (*ẓulm*) and without any justification (*bi ghayr ḥaqq*). It is well worth pointing out here that *ẓulm* according to the prevailing Arab notion was that which was beyond the pale of recognized law and custom. Watt says that what was inflicted upon the Muslims was mild and slight. The Qur'ân shows that the persecution and oppression upon the Muslims, which included driving them out of their homes and properties, obliged them to become refugees seeking shelter in another place. It hardly needs elaborating that the persecution and oppression thus inflicted on them were severe and inhuman; for neither could the act of driving out one of one's home and property be designated a mild act of opposition, nor could it be suggested that the Muslims were obliged to seek shelter elsewhere simply because they were faced with mild opposition and petty annoyances!

With reference to the passage 85:1-7 Watt says that it "might reflect persecution at Mecca", but Western scholars are inclined to regard it as a description of hell and that "by itself the passage cannot be taken as evidence of the perrsecution of the Muslims".[1]

1. *Ibid.*, 132.

Yes, the passage in question reflects persecution at Makka. This is not the only Qur'ânic passage of this sort. There are a number of other passages which refer to the oppressions perpetrated by the previous peoples upon their respective Prophets and believers and to the consequences that befell those unbelieving people. These passages are intended to warn the Makkan unbelievers and encourage the Prophet and his followers to persevere in the mission and faith.[1] As regards the statement that Western scholars are inclined to regard the passage as a description of hell, Watt does not identify any of them. If anyone regarded the passage as a description of hell, he would be sadly mistaken; for whoever might have been the "people of the trench" (*'aṣḥâb al-'ukhdûd*) referred to in the passage, it clearly speaks of a group of believers being persecuted in fire while their persecutors, the unbelievers, were looking on and enjoying the sight. By no stretch of the imagination could the Qur'ân ever describe a scene wherein the *believers* are being punished in hell and the *unbelievers* looking on and enjoying it! Such a supposition is grotesquely contrary to the spirit not only of the Qur'ân but of any religious scripture inculcating a belief in final judgement and life in the hereafter.

As regards the statement that by itself the passage cannot be taken as evidence of the persecution of the Muslim it may be asked: Why should this passage alone, or why should the Qur'ânic evidence alone, be taken "by itself" to identify the details and nature of the Makkan opposition, notwithstanding the fact that Watt himself recongnizes that the Qur'ân does not give "detailed descriptions" of the activities of the Prophet's opponents and that the traditional accounts are a necessary and in some respects indispensable supplementary source of information?[2] The fact is that Watt here, as in many other places, considers the information of the traditional accounts in isolation and belittles it; then he takes up the Qur'ânic evidence in isolation and belittles it. His method has the appearance of taking both the types of evidence into account; but in reality it avoids the very essential work of collating and coordinating the two types of evidence. If this was done, and without any attempt to minimize the implication of either, a totally different picture of the Makkan opposition would have emerged. It would have then been clear that the unbelievers, in the course of their persecution of the Muslims, inhumanly tortured to death a number of believers, exposed a number of others in the mid-day desert sun, putting heavy and hot stones on their

1. See for instance Q. 2:214 and 28:4.

2. *Ibid.*, 131. See also his "The reliability of Ibn Isḥâq's sources" in *La Vie Du Prophète Mahomet Colloque de Strasbourg*, October, 1980, pp.31-43.

breasts, putting some of them, bare-bodied with hands and feet tightly bound, on burning charcoals, severly beating and torturing persons of high families, capturing and keeping them confined without food and water for days together, disowning and expelling dozens of others from their families and clans, excommunicating, boycotting and economically blockading a whole clan for the sole purpose of obtaining the person of the Prophet whom the unbelievers openly resolved to kill, and even plotting to kill him surreptitiously, etc. If one is not too apologetic for the unbelievers one would not fail to recognize that such acts of violence and hostility, even if "always within the letter of the law" of the Quraysh, were extremely oppressive acts and were by no means "mild" or "slight" persecution as Watt would have us believe.

(B) WATT ON THE PRESSURE UPON BANÛ HÂSHIM

As one of the manoeuvres of the opposition Watt discusses in a separate sub-section the pressure on Banû Hâshim.[1] He says that the Quraysh leaders headed by 'Abû Jahl appealed more than once to 'Abû Ṭâlib either to stop his nephew "proclaiming his new religion or else to withdraw his protection from him"; but 'Abû Ṭâlib refused to do either.[2] Watt does not emphasize in this connection nor in connection with his treatment of the boycott of Banû Hâshim[3] that the Quraysh leaders' sole purpose in both the cases was to obtain the person of the Prophet in order to put him to death and thereby cause the death of his mission. Definitely they did not want Banû Hâshim to withdraw their protection from the Prophet for the purpose of persecuting him "mildly" or "slightly" so that he would abandon his mission!

Watt further says that the attitude of 'Abû Ṭâlib and of Banû Hâshim in general was determined, besides the question of the honour of the clan, by "a question of economic policy". For, argues Watt, the Prophet's movement, "though primarily religious, impinged upon economic matters, and in this respect" it constituted a continuation of the "attitude of the Ḥilf al-Fuḍûl of opposition to unscrupulous monopolists" and of "the traditional policy of Banû Hâshim".[4] Even the boycott of Banû Hâshim, states Watt, was a stage "in the aggrandizement of Makhzûm and their associated clans at the

1. Watt, *M. at M.*, 119-122.
2. *Ibid.*, 119-120.
3. *Ibid.*, 120-122.
4. *Ibid.*, 120.

expense of the Ḥilf al-Fuḍûl".[1]

To substantiate this piece of his economic or materialistic interpretation Watt cites a few facts that really prove to the contrary and show how he cites facts in a sense quite opposite to their clear and direct implication. Thus, in support of the theory of Banû Hâshim's continuing the policy of the *Ḥilf al-Fuḍûl* Watt says that when 'Abû Ṭâlib offered protection for his sister's son 'Abû Salamah ibn 'Abd al-Asad of Banû Makhzûm, 'Abû Lahab also supported the action.[2] Having said this Watt immediatedly adds that the case of 'Abû Lahab is "interesting", since he "yielded" to the pressure of the opposition and sided with his wife's clan, 'Abd Shams, because of "his business relations" with them.[3]

Now, the case of 'Abû Lahab is not really "interesting". What is interesting is the use made of him by Watt to support his view. Earlier in his work he cites 'Abû Lahab's case as an instance of the growth of "individualism".[4] Now he states that 'Abû Lahab "yielded" to the pressure of the opposition and that he sided with his wife's clan because of his "business relations" with them. If 'Abû Lahab's policy was guided from the beginning by his supposed "individualism" and his business relations with Banû 'Abd Shams, there is no need to suggest that he "yielded" to the pressure of the opposition. In fact 'Abû Lahab started opposing the Prophet from the very start of his mission and without any pressure having been brought to bear on him. But even if we put the best construction on Watt's statements and accept the suggestion that 'Abû Lahab's attitude was guided by both business considerations and pressure of the opposition, it appears very "interesting" that Watt at the same time suggests that 'Abû Lahab supported 'Abû Ṭâlib's stand regarding 'Abû Salamah because he ('Abû Lahab) approved of the policy of Banû Hâshim's continuing the policy of opposition to unscrupulous monopolists. If 'Abû Ṭâlib's attitude in protecting the Prophet and 'Abû Salamah was at all guided by the alleged economic reason of continuing the policy of the *Ḥilf al-Fuḍûl*, and if 'Abû Lahab thought at all that the Prophet's movement and 'Abû Ṭâlib's policy were in line with the traditional policy of the *Ḥilf al-Fuḍûl* he would have supported that policy from

1. *Ibid.,* 121.
2. *Ibid.,* 120.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Supra,* p.109. See also Watt *M. at. M,* 18-19.

the very start instead of doing so at a much later stage in connection with the affair of 'Abû Salamah and that also only momentarily. The fact is that 'Abû Lahab's support for 'Abû Ṭâlib's stand in connection with 'Abû Salamah was due to considerations other than the question of the alleged continuatin of the policy of the *Ḥilf al-Fuḍûl*. It is worth pointing out here that Banû 'Abd Shams itself was formerly a prominent member of the *Ḥilf al-Fuḍûl* but, according to Watt himself, it had now come to have "very close business relations with Makhzûm" because "common interests" rather than "traditional alliances" moulded its policy.[1] That being the case, the question arises, why Banû Hâshim alone, and 'Abû Lahab himself, should now be particularly interested in continuing the policy of the *Ḥilf*? Watt does not, however, ask himself the question, let alone answer it.

Similarly, in connection with the boycott which is stated to be "a stage in the aggrandizement of Makhzûm" Watt refers to the poem which 'Abû Ṭâlib is said to have composed on the occasion and in which he reproaches a number of persons, "all members of clans in the Ḥilf al-Fuḍûl", for their supporting the old enemy — Banû Sahm, Banû Jumaḥ and Banû Makhzûm.[2] Watt further points out that those who took the lead in breaking the boycott such as Hishâm ibn 'Amr of Banû 'Âmir, Al-Muṭ'im ibn 'Abdiyy of Banû Asad, did so because with the passage of time they realized that the grand alliance and the boycott were strengthening the monopolistic controls of the strong clans.[3]

These facts, far from substantiating Watt's theory, only emphasize the question raised above. For, apart from the question of doubtful authenticity of 'Abû Ṭâlib's reputed poem, even if it is taken to reflect the actual state of affairs, it shows that the leaders mentioned in the poem, *all* of whom were members of clans formerly in the *Ḥilf*, did not consider 'Abû Ṭâlib's policy or the Prophet's movement a continuation of the policy of the *Ḥilf* or in defence of it. It is also not very convincing to say that those who took the lead in breaking the boycott only realized with the passage of time that it was aimed at the aggrandizement of Banû Makhzûm at the cost of the clans of the *Ḥilf al-Fuḍûl*. After all, whatever might have been the attitude of those Quraysh leaders towards the Prophet, they were shrewd businessmen

1. Watt, *op.cit.*, 122.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*

and would not have failed to see through the manoeuvre of Makhzûm from the very beginning. Then, how could the boycott be establishing the monopolistic controls of clans outside the *Ḥilf* only while the boycott was directed not against all the clans of the *Ḥilf* but only against Banû Hâshim (with Banû al-Muṭṭalib)? It is also not quite correct that all the leaders of the boycott breaking movement were from the clans of the *Ḥilf al-Fuḍûl*. In fact Zuhayr ibn 'Abî 'Umayyah of Banû Makzûm led the opposition in the assembly of the Quraysh where the boycott ending resolution was taken. Watt seems to have studiously omitted mentioning him in this connection. Thus the theory that the pressure on Banû Hâshim, more particulary the boycott, was a stage in the aggrandizement of Banû Makhzûm at the cost of the clans of the *Ḥilf al-Fuḍûl* and conversely that 'Abû Ṭâlib supported the Prophet because his movement was a continuation of the policy of opposition to unscrupulous monopolists initiated by the *Ḥilf al-Fuḍûl* does not stand reason, nor is it sustained by the facts adduced by Watt in its support.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE UNBELIEVERS' OBJECTIONS *VIS-À-VIS* THE ORIENTALISTS

I. SIMILARITY OF THE VIEWS OF THE UNBELIEVERS AND THE ORIENTALISTS

As indicated in the last chapter, since the beginning of the twentieth century the orientalists appear to have paid special attention to the Qur'ânic evidence pertaining to the Makkan unbelievers' objections to the Prophet and his mission. In doing so they aim at two things. They stress that the history of the Makkan opposition was mainly the story of a debate, that it chiefly consisted of verbal criticisms of the Prophet and his message and not so much of physical persecution of the converts. Secondly, the orientalists attempt to justify, directly or indirectly, the unbelievers' objections thus raised.

That the Makkan persecution of the converts was not "mild" or "slight" has been shown in the previous chapter. The present chapter deals with the views of the orientalists regarding the various objections raised by the unbelievers. These objections related to many important topics like prophethood, revelation, resurrection, *qadr*, miracles and the like. Obviously it is not feasible to make a detailed discussion on all these topics in a single chapter. The present chapter would therefore be confined to noticing the orientalists' remarks about the principal items of objections and to showing how those remarks are either misconceived or inappropriate. Before proceeding to do so, however, it would be worthwhile to note that the views and assumptions of the orientalists as a whole are very much similar to the objections raised by the unbelievers.

The pith of the Makkan unbelievers' objctions was that Muḥammad (ﷺ) was no Prophet or Messenger of God. The orientalists endeavour to bring home the same thing, directly or indirectly. The unbelievers held that Muḥammad (ﷺ) did not receive any revelation or communication from God but was prompted by a devil or *jinn* or by some supernatural being. The orientalists similarly attempt to prove that the Prophet, though he sincerely believed that what he gave out was from God, it was really something which was prompted to him by others or grew out of his mind and reflection — an

"intellectual" or "imaginary" locution. Indeed the orientalists' recognition of sincerity on the Prophet's part is related to this view of theirs about revelation. The unbelievers alleged that the Prophet had turned mad or was a poet. Many of the orientalists, though they do not attribute madness to the Prophet, say that he suffered from some sort of ailment, an epilepsy or fainting disease. They also generally think that he was a sort of a poet and the Qur'ân is in the nature of a poetical composition. The unbelievers alleged that what the Prophet gave out was "tales of the ancients"; the orientalists hold that the Prophet drew heavily on the Jewish and Christian scriptures and beliefs. The unbelievers alleged that the Prophet was tutored by some persons; the orientalists hold more or less the same notion and say that, even if he had no particular tutor, he had learnt a good deal from the Jews and Christians, particularly from persons like Waraqah ibn Nawfal. The unbelievers thought that the Prophet aimed at personal aggrandizement and leadership; the orientalists similarly attempt to prove his ambition and preparation for the role he played. One of the accusations of the unbelievers was that the Prophet was breaking families and seducing children from their parents; the orientalists, particularly Watt, adopt and support the same accusation. Another objection of the unbelievers was that Muḥammad (ﷺ) was a person not important enough to be chosen by God as His Messenger. The orientalists, taking their cue from the Qur'ânic reference to this objection, attempt to show that the Prophet did not really belong to a noble and high family as the sources give him out to be; and that his family, even if once important in Makkan affairs, had gone down in the world when he emerged on the scene. One of the Quraysh leaders specifically stated that he viewed tha Prophet's mission as only a stage in the age-old rivalry for prominence and leadership between his (the leader's) clan and Banû Hâshim. The orientalists adopt more or less the same view. Particularly Watt's grandiloquent "materialistic" interpretation and his theory that the rise of Islam has to be viewed in the light of the age-old rivalry for influence and affluence between two groups of Quraysh clans, appear to be an adaptation and elaboration of the Quraysh leader's point of view.

It is thus not at all unnatural that in general the orientalists would try to justify and endorse the objections raised by the unbelievers. This is particularly so in the cases of Margoliouth and Watt whose main remarks in this respect are discussed in the following two sections.

II. ON MARGOLIOUTH'S REMARKS

According to Margoliouth the objections "recorded and ostensibly answered" in the Qur'ân were directed "against every part and feature of the new system; against the Prophet personally, against his notion of prophecy, against his style, his statements, his doctrines".[1] He further states that though much of the Qur'ân is not "polemical, but homiletic or narrative",[2] it is certain that at an early period "it circulated in writing" in answer to an objection or objections.[3] In this connection Margoliouth observes, somewhat inconsistently, that the Prophet was "indeed a powerful preacher" but "apparently not a ready debater, and was worsted when he tried his plan." Margoliouth further alleges that the Prophet was "apt to give violent and insulting answers to questions"; so he "received divine instructions not to take part in open debate, and if addressed and questioned by unbelievers, to evade the question and retire."[4]

In support of his statement that the Prophet was "apt to give violent and insulting answers to questions" Margoliouth cites Al-Ṭabarî's *tafsîr*, XXIII, 19. A reference to the work shows that the commentary here relates to a description of the state of those who would be in paradise. Particularly it is an explanation of the expression ﴿إن أصحٰب الجنّة اليوم فى شغل فـٰكهون﴾ (36:55) and the discussion revoles round the meaning of the phrase *fî shughulin fâkihûn* ﴿فى شغل فـٰكهون﴾. Whatever night be the meaning of that expression it by no means relates to the Prophet's nature as a debater or to his alleged aptness to give violent and insulting replies to questions put to him. Margoliouth's citing this reference to support his statement is absolutely incorrect and grievously misleading.

And since his above mentioned remark is unwarranted, the other remark based on it, namely, that on account of that alleged aptness on his part to give violent replies, the Prophet received divine instructions to avoid taking part in open debate, etc, is also a misstatement and an unwarranted assertion. Margoliouth of course cites *'âyah* 6:67 (actually 6:68) in support of the alleged divine instruction. It runs as follows:

﴿وإذ رأيت الّذين يخوضون فى ءايـٰتنا فأعرض عنهم حتّىٰ يخوضوا فى حديث غيره . . . ﴾

1. Margoliouth, *op.cit,* 130.
2. *Ibid.,* 145.
3. *Ibid.,* 128.
4. *Ibid.,* 127.

"And when you see those who engage in (ridiculing) Our signs, turn away from them until they take up a different discussion....." (6:68)

Obviously it is an instruction to the Prophet to avoid those who reviled and ridiculed the revelation.[1] It might even be taken to mean that the Prophet was asked not to engage in disputations with those people. But neither this *'âyah* nor anything else in the Qur'ân suggests that the instruction was given because he was apt to use "violent and insulting" language in debates, as Margoliouth alleges. In fact the emphasis of the *'âyah* is on the uselessness of engaging in verbal discussions with those who were bent upon merely ridiculing and defying the revelation; for no fruitful purpose could be served unless the discussion was conducted in a spirit of understanding and enquiry.

That this is the purport of the instruction is made clear in the passage 4:140 which obviously refers to the one cited above and is in the nature of an explanation of it. The passage runs as foollows:

﴿وقد نزّل عليكم فى الكتـٰب أن إذا سمعتم ءايـٰت الله يكفر بها ويستهزأ بها فلا تقعدوا معهم حتّى يخوضوا فى حديث غيره...﴾ (٤: ١٤٠)

"And He has sent down on you in the book that when you hear Our signs being defied and ridiculed, do not sit with them until they pursue a different discussion..." (4:140)

The instruction here is as much for the Prophet as for the believers in general.

Another allegation made by Margoliouth is that the Prophet "followed the examples of the New Testament Prophets in threatening that a terrible day was at hand" and related their stories, for "in their persons" he overcame the objections of his opponents.[2] The Makkans according to Margoliouth, "though true to the rites of paganism, took a philosophical view of the order of events, and they justly ridiculed any threat of temporal punishment for disobeying a Prophet" and were of the view that "the moral conduct of mankind had nothing to do with it." Hence they "scornfully" asked the Prophet to bring down on them the punishments; but the Prophet "ingeniously declared that his presence in Meccah prevented the calamity; or the experience of Allah with other cities which had failed to be convinced by miracles was what prevented him from sending one by Mohammed."[3] Margoliouth also mentions the types of miracles the Makkans asked for and says that only on

1. See Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr*, VII, 228; Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr*, III,272.
2. Margoliouth, *op.cit.*, 130-131.
3. *Ibid.*, 132.

one occasion the Prophet ventured on a prophecy, "that the famous declaration that though the Greeks had been defeated by the Persians in 'the nearest part of the earth', they would yet again be victorious." Margoliouth adds that the "guess was not an unnatural one to hazard."[1] He further says that many years had to elapse before the Prophet "could triumphantly meet the demand for a miracle: the battle of Badr". Before that he had only to make shifts with the Qur'ân. He said that if he had no miraculous power, he had "miraculous knowledge", for he described scenes of ancient history "at which he had not been present." And finally "when he had become perfect in his own peculiar style", he challenged anyone , with even the aid of jinn, "to compose so well."[2] The Quraysh, continues Margoliouth, took exception "to the miraculous character of both the matter and style of the Koran" and replied that the stories of "the Christian and Jewish books" which the Prophet related were taught him by people whom they even mentioned. Margoliouth further observes that "whether there was a mentor or not, probably the stories were not altogether new to the Meccans". Further, one of the Makkans, Al-Naḍr ibn al-Ḥârith, accepted the challenge, versified the tales of the Persian kings, and read out those "sûrahs" at "seances similar to those in which the Prophet published the Koran". The effect of Al-Naḍr's action, stresses Margoliouth, "must have been very damaging; for when the Prophet at the battle of Badr got the man in his power, he executed him at once, while he allowed the other prisoners to be ransomed."[3]

Thus Margoliouth levels four specific allegations against the Prophet in connection with the Makkans' argumentation with him. (a) He says that the Prophet threatened an imminent divine punishment but when challenged to bring down the punishment he avoided doing so by saying that his presence amidst the Makkans prevented God from sending down the punishment. (b) That the Prophet similarly avoided producing a miracle by saying that because many previous people had refused to be convinced by miracles this prevented Allah from "sending one by" him. (c) That before the battle of Badr the Prophet only made "shifts" with the Qur'ân saying that if he had "no miraculous power" he had miraculous knowledge; for he described

1. *Ibid.*, 133-134.
2. *Ibid.*, 134.
3. *Ibid.*, 135.

scenes of ancient history at which he had not been present; and when he became perfect in his style he challenged anyone to "compose so well". (d) That the Makkans objected to the miraculous nature of both the contents and style of the Qur'ân, saying that the Prophet related the stories of the Christian and Jewish books by being taught these by others. Also one of the Quraysh opponents, Al-Naḍr, so successfully versified the tales of the Persian kings that the Prophet, when he got hold of him at the battle of Badr, executed him though the other prisoners were allowed to be ransomed.

These allegations and observations are based on a series of misconceptions and misinterpretations of several Qur'ânic passages. Thus, with regard to the "terrible day at hand" against which Muḥammad (ﷺ) as well as the New Testament prophets warned has reference to the "Day of Judgement", not to any divine punishment befalling sinners in this world. Margoliouth simply mixes this up with the instances of divine punishment that befell some past generations on account of their persistent transgressions and of which mention is made in many a Qur'ânic passage. The Prophet did indeed recite these passages as also those relating to the "terrible day" in order to make the unbelievers mend their ways. The passages relating to the past generations of course implied that if the Makkans persisted in their disbelief and disobedience such a fate might befall them. But never did the Prophet suggest that he had *the power* to bring down the punishment on them, nor did he ever indicate that he would ask Allah to send down such punishment. The Makkan unbelievers misunderstood, as does Margoliouth, that the Prophet falsely threatened to bring punishment on them and therefore demanded him to do so. The Prophet was however not in such haste nor was he despaired of the generality of the Makkan people's ultimate acceptance of the truth. Hence even in the darkest hour of the Makkan period of his mission he did not invoke Allah to punish his people. If one goes carefully through the relevant Makkan passages one would see that the one and consistent reply given to the foolish demand of the unbelievers was that Allah had His Own plan and followed His Own timing in awarding punishment, and not the whims of the erring and un-understanding humanity. That Allah in His All-Pervasive knowledge knew that the generality of the Makkans were not past the capacity to reform and that the Prophet was right in his expectation of their ultimate conversion to the truth are amply illustrated by the fact that in the course of his life-time and within the span of a little more than a decade the Makkans not only accepted the truth but

became its ardent champions. The difference between them and Margoliouth is that while they saw the truth, recognized their past folly and made ample amends for it, he in effect adopts their unbelief and cites their foolish demand, which they themselves rejected and retracted, as an argument in support of the supposed falsity of Muḥammad's (ﷺ) claim to prophethood!

Margoliouth's gravest error in this connection lies in his statement that the Prophet, in order to avoid bringing down the threatened punishment, ingeniously advanced the plea that his presence among the Makkans prevented Allah from sending it down. Obviously Margoliouth's allusion is to 8:33, ﴿وما كان الله ليعذّبهم وأنت فيهم...﴾ "(And Allah was not going to punish them while you were amidst them...)". Margoliouth fails to notice that this *'âyah* was revealed at Madina after the battle of Badr. It was thus not at all addressed to the Makkan undelievers in reply to their foolish demand. It was specifically addressed to the Prophet and the Muslims, pointing out that the annihilation of the Makkan leaders at the battle of Badr was indeed an act of Allah, a miracle, but Allah had deferred it till that time because the Prophet had not yet migrated and had been working amongst them expecting their acceptance of the truth. But now that they had driven out the Prophet and the Muslims and had prevented the believers from repairing to the Holy Mosque (Ka'ba), presuming themselves to be its guardians, Allah had brought down the deserving punishment on the arrogant leaders. The whole passage runs as follows:

﴿وما كان الله ليعذّبهم وأنت فيهم وما كان الله معذّبهم وهم يستغفرون * وما لهم ألّا يعذّبهم الله وهم يصدّون عن المسجد الحرام وما كانوا أولياءَه إن أولياؤه إلّا المتّقون ولكنّ أكثرهم لا يعلمون﴾ (٨:٣٣-٣٤)

"And Allah was not to punish them while you were amidst them; nor was Allah to punish them while they (could) seek forgiveness. But what plea have they (now) that Allah should not punish them, when they prevent (men) from the Holy Mosque, and they are not its guardians? Verily its guardians are none but the God-fearing; but most of them do not know."(8:33-34)

Thus, far from being a reply given to the foolish demand of the Makkan leaders, the passage is addressed to the Prophet and the Muslims emphasizing the miracle at Badr which Allah had wrought in their favour. It is *not an ingenious excuse* advanced by the Prophet to evade bringing down the punishment, as Margoliouth misleadingly suggests. It refers very clearly to the punishment which had already been inflicted on the arrogant Makkan leaders and which, incidentally, Margoliouth seems to recognize as a mir-

acle. The passage also emphasizes the fact that Allah has His Own plan and timing in punishing the sinners and that He does so in such a manner as saves the Prophets and the believers from the catastrophe.[1] Margoliouth should have realized that the Qur'ânic statement which he supposes to be an ingenious excuse on the Prophet's part could not logically be any excuse at all. For the stories of the previous Prophets as told in the Qur'ân make it unmistakably clear that while Allah annihilated the sinful peoples He invariably saved at the same time the Prophets and their followers who were from among those very people. And there was nothing to prevent Him from similarly saving the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) and his followers if He willed to punish the Makkan unbelievers. Similarly ill-conceived is Margoliouth's remark that the Prophet evaded producing any miracle by saying that Allah's experience with the former generations who had refused to be convinced by the "signs" prevented Him from sending one by him. In this connection Margoliouth further states that the Prophet, by believing and accepting the miraculous stories of the Bible and by repeating them in "perfectly good faith", exposed himself to the criticism of his own mission and of his not himself providing any miracle.[2] Margoliouth's allusion is clearly to 17:59 : "And it did not restrain Us from despatching the signs except that the former peoples disbelieved them...." ﴿وما منعنا أن نرسل بالأيـٰت إلّا أن كذّب بها الأوّلون...﴾. Before proceeding to explain this *'âyah* it is necessary to recapitulate three facts. First, the Prophet did never claim for himself *any* miraculous power, nor did he ever call upon anyone to accept him as a Prophet because he could perform miracles. The Qur'ân, and therefore the Prophet stressed that it was not for any Prophet to work miracles except by Allah's leave and command.[3] Second, it was the unbelievers who, because of their peculiar notions about prophethood, demanded of the Prophet to come up not just with any miracle, but with certain very strange or even suicidal performances specified by them. These were of course not acceded to. Third, it is not a fact that Allah did not cause any miracle to happen at the hand of the Prophet. Not to speak of the reports concerning the various miracles that took place at the instance of the Prophet, the Qur'ân bears witness to the occurrence of a number of them. The battle of Badr was a miracle; so was the transient

1. See for instance Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr.*, III, 589-590.
2. Margoliouth, *op.cit.*, 132-133.
3. See for instance 13:38 and 40:78, both of which run as follows:

﴿...وما كان لرسول أن يأتى بـٔاية إلّا بإذن الله...﴾

cleaving of the moon. The *isrâ'* and *mi'râj* were miracles; and the Qur'ân itself, by its own challenging assertion, is an abiding miracle which Allah bestowed on the Prophet.

Now, if the first fact mentioned above is kept in mind, it should be clear that there could be no question of the Prophet's avoiding the performance of any miracle; for he just did not claim any miraculous power for himself. And as he said that it was Allah who caused miracles to take place through the Prophets, he could not conceivably have stated that Allah would not or was incapable of causing *any* to happen through him. Nor is it true, as already indicated, that none did happen in his case. Margoliouth's innuendo and the Qur'ânic passage alluded to in this connection have in fact reference to the second point mentioned above. The reports concerning the revelation of the passage 17:59[1] show that the unbelievers, just like their demand for causing the threatened punishment to fall on them, asked the Prophet to call on Allah, if he was truly His messenger, to transform the mount Ṣafâ into a hill of gold, or to erase the hills and mountains of the land and transform it into smiling agricultural fields. In their haughtiness they even asked for a rain of stones to fall on them. The passage under reference is a reply to those foolish demands. It is noteworthy that the expression *bi al-'âyât* is in the definite form (being prefixed by the definite aticle *al*). It thus speaks about the specific miraculous performances which the unbelievers asked for. And just as their demand for punishment was rejected, so was this peculiar demand, and for similar reasons. Margoliouth interprets the *'âyah* as meaning that Allah declined to send down the miracles simply because the previous peoples, had refused to be convinced by them. The implication is not that. The implication is that their refusal to accept the truth even when their challenging demands were met meant that there would remain no alternative but to punish them, for inaction even after that would confirm the unbelievers' claim that neither prophethood nor the existence of Allah deserved any credence. Hence the inevitability of punishment under such a situation. By referring to the disbelief of former peoples in similar miracles the *'âyah* in fact implies the inevitability of punishment that befell those peoples and indicates that it was not Allah's plan that such should be the fate of the Makkans. It was no avoiding the performance of the miracles asked for; it was an avoiding of the sure ruin which the Makkan unbelievers foolishly and haughtily asked for.

1. See for instance Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr*, XV, 107-109.

Indeed the reports state that on their asking for such miracles Allah had deputed the angel Jibrîl to ask the Prophet whether he desired that the miracles they demanded should be granted and they thus be driven to sure ruin or whether they should be given a respite and a chance to reform. The Prophet preferred the latter.[1] As in the case of their demand for bringing down the punishnent on them, so in respect of their demand for the specific miracles, the same considerations prevented their being carried out. And subsequent events only proved the correctness of Allah's plan and the Prophet's expectations.

The third of Margoliouth's allegations is that before the battle of Badr the Prophet had only made "shifts" with the Qur'ân saying that if he had no miraculous power he had "miraculous knowledge", for he described scenes of ancient history at which he had not been present; and when he became perfect in his style he challenged anyone to "compose so well". From this statement Margoliouth seems to recognize that the battle of Badr was a miracle. He also seems to recognize that the prophecy about the victory of the Romans, despite their crushing defeat, over the Persians, was in the nature of a miracle, though he attempts to belittle it. The prophecy is indeed an evidence of the miraculous nature of the Qur'ân; but the Prophet did not claim it to be a miracle performed by him. Nor did he claim the battle of Badr to be his own miracle; it was cited only as an instance of Allah's miraculous help for the handful of Muslims against an overwhelming host. Nor is it correct that till the battle of Badr the Prophet only made "shifts" with the Qur'ân, especially by claiming "miraculous knowledge" of past events at which he had not been present. The allusion is clearly to such passages of the Qur'ân as 12:102, 28:44 and 3:44. These passages relate to the stories about the previous Prophets. Of these passages the last mentioned definitely belongs to a post-Badr period. Be that as it may, the statement that when the Prophet thus perfected his style he threw out the challenge to anyone to "compose so well" is manifestly wrong. For the Qur'ânic challenge to anyone to come forward with any composition comparable to its text is not confined to those portions of the Qur'ân that were given out after the Prophet is alleged to have perfected his style. The challenge was made with reference to each and every part of the Qur'ân, both earlier and later revelations, and it remains open even now.

1. *Ibid.*

This brings us to the fourth item of Margoliouth's remarks, namely, that the Makkans objected to the miraculous nature of both the general character and style of the Qur'ân by saying that the Prophet was taught the ancient stories by some persons. Also that Al-Naḍr ibn al-Ḥârith successfully rivalled the Qur'ânic compositions by versifying the stories of the Persian kings so that the Prophet, when he got Al-Naḍr within his grasp, had him executed forthwith.

None of these statements of Margoliouth's is justifibale. It is not true that the Quraysh took exception "to the miraculous character of both the matter and style" of the Qur'ân. As regards the general character and style of the Qur'ân they always regarded it as *siḥr* or magic; but they obstinately asserted that the Prophet had been taught the ancient stories by some persons and also that the texts had been composed for him by others. These allegations of theirs were really marks of their bewilderment at the miraculous style of the Qur'ân and an acknowledgement that the Prophet himself was capable neither of producing such a style of text nor the facts contained therein. Hence the Qur'ân very aptly refuted their allegation by pointing out that the persons they alleged to be the Prophet's tutors or clerks were all the more incapable of producing such a text because they were not native speakers of the langauge itself. Margoliouth's remarks in this connection are somewhat confusing. He says that "whether there was a mentor or not, probably the stories were not altogether new to the Meccans" who heard them in the course of their trade journeys from the Jews and Christians.[1] Thus, while the Makkans themselves did not claim any knowledge of the Prophetic stories and thought that these were taught to the Prophet by someone else, Margoliouth assumes that "the stories were not altogether new to the Meccans". Now, earlier in his work Margoliouth suggests, as noticed before,[2] that the Prophet acquired a knowledge of the Biblical stories from the Jews and Christians which he retold in the Qur'ân. And here Margoliouth would have us believe that the Quraysh criticised the Prophet because they had also heard the stories from the Jews and Christians. Of course, in a general sense, the Prophetic stories were not altogether something unheard of; but if the Quraysh had really found that the Qur'ânic narratives were the same as those they had already heard in the course of their

1. Margoliouth, *op.cit.,* 134.
2. See *supra.* pp. 254-255.

trade journeys, they would not have alleged that some person or persons had taught the Prophet those stories and would have rather dismissed him outright by saying that he had come out with nothing new.

Nor is it at all correct that Al-Naḍr ibn al-Ḥârith had successfully rivalled by his composition the style of the Qur'ân. He did indeed versify the stories of the Persian kings and recite them at gatherings to distract the people from listening to the Qur'ân; but there is no indication whatsoever in the sources that his efforts met with any amount of success. We do not hear of anyone falling away from Islam or even relapsing into skepticism about the Prophet on account of Al-Naḍr's exhibitions as we hear in connection with some other incidents like *isrâ'* and *mi'râj*. In fact had Al-Naḍr composed anything at all comparable to any part of the Qur'ân the Quraysh would have made a hill out of that mole and would have preserved and transmitted it as a continuing challenge to the Prophet's claim. After all, the Quraysh had remained at the helm of affairs at Makka for a considerable time even after the battle of Badr. And since the supposition that Al-Naḍr was a rival composer is totally baseless, the allegation made against the Prophet on that ground that he executed him because of the damaging effect of his composition is totally wrong and malicious. Nor was Al-Naḍr the only prisoner of the battle of Badr to be executed. He along with at least another prisoner were condemned to death for offences other than his alleged success as a rival composer.

Margoliouth makes a number of other allegations based on the Makkan unbelievers' objections. Thus with reference to their demand for the revelation of the whole Qur'ân in one instalment Margoliouth says that if it was "really copied from a 'well-guarded tablet', why could it not have been produced in a final edition once for all [sic]?"[1] He further says that the reason given by the Prophet for his not doing so was "his own personal comfort or convenience". Similarly, argues Margoliouth, Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism, "having published his *Book of Mormons* as a volume, was compelled to supplement it from time to time with occasional revelations."[2]

Obviously Margoliouth's innuendo is that the Prophet avoided giving out the Qur'ân all at a time in order to avoid the inconvenience faced by Joseph

1. Margoliouth, *op.cit.*, 135-136.
2. *Ibid.*, 136.

Smith some one thousand years subsequently of revising the statements from time to time. Yet Margoliouth levels that very allegation against the Prophet on the very next page of his (Margoliouth's) work and says that the Prophet, after having allegedly made incorrect or imprudent statements, revised them by producing amended or fresh revelations.[1] The fact is that neither did the Prophet bring revelations in instalments for his own comfort or personal convenience, nor for avoiding the need for revisions and corrections; nor did he make such corrections or revisions in the revelations.

Margoliouth's innuendo about the Prophet's personal convenience has allusion to the Qur'ânic passage 25:32 which runs as follows:

﴿وقال الّذين كفروا لولا نزّل عليه القرءان جملة واحدة كذلك لنثبّت به فؤادك ورتّلنـه ترتيلا﴾ (٢٥:٣٢ الفرقان)

"The unbelievers say: Why is not the Qur'ân sent down on him all at once?' Thus (is it), in order that We may affix therewith your heart; and We do reveal it gradually". (25:32)

The *'âyah* furnishes two important reasons for the gradual revelation of the Qur'ân. In the first place it says that it was so revealed because Allah intended thereby to affix therewith or to strengthen thereby "your heart". The pharse 'your heart' refers to the Prophet as well as to the Muslims. The significance of the *'âyah* is that Allah's intention was to habituate the Muslims gradually to the teachings and beneficial reforms of the Qur'ân.[2] Indeed each passage was revealed on the most appropriate occasion and situation so that the meaning and implications were affixed in the minds of the early Muslims in the context of practical situations and that subsequent Muslims would get the appropriate light and guidance when faced with similar situations and questions. The *'âyah* also means that the Qur'ân was so revealed in stages that the text is affixed in the Prophet's heart so he would not forget it and that similarly he would recite the text, as revealed, to the early Muslims to enable them gradually to get it by heart. This reason for the gradual revelation of the Qur'ân is explained in two other passages, 17:106 and 87:6, which run respectively as follows:

﴿وقرءانا فرقنـه لتقرأه على النّاس على مكث ونزّلنـه تنزيلا﴾ (١٧:١٠٦)

"And a Qur'ân which We have divided (into parts) in order that you recite it unto

1. *Ibid.*, 137,139.
2. See Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr,* VI, 118.

men at intervals; and We have sent it down in istalments". (17:106)

﴿ سنقرئك فلا تنسىٰ ﴾ (٨٧ : ٦)

And, "We shall have it read unto you; so you shall not forget (it)". (87:6)

The second and more fundamental reason given in the *'âyah* 25:32 (as well as in 17:106) is that it is Allah Who thus sent the revelations to the Prophet in instalments and by stages,[1] so that there was no question of his himself producing it all at once. Indeed the objection which the unbelievers made of his not producing the entire Qur'ân at a time and which Margoliouth reiterates constitutes the most effective argument in favour of the Prophet's not having himself composed the text of the Qur'ân. For, if it was his composition he could have come up with the whole or a substantial part of it at a time, instead of giving out mostly short passages, particularly as Margoliouth himself alleges that the Prophet made elaborate and calculated plans to play the role he did and appeared on the scene when his plans matured! The instance of Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, which Margoliouth cites, also proves this; for, as he planned to play the role of a Prophet he came up with a complete book composed and prepared beforehand. He did so obviously because he must have been aware, like Margoliouth, of the type of objections raised by the Makkan unbelievers against Muḥammad (ﷺ)!

And a third reason is given in the *'âyah* that immediately follows, namely, 25:33, which states: "And they cannot come to you with a question except that We bring to you the truth and the best explanation" ﴿ ولا يأتونك بمثل إلا جئنـٰك بالحقّ وأحسن تفسيرا ﴾. Thus one of the reasons for sending the revelations to the Prophet gradually was to provide the truth and the best explanation about the questions and objections the unbelievers raised from time to time, and not all at once. And even with regard to this particular objection about the Qur'ân's not being revealed all at once the unbelievers were advancing only a lame excuse for their unbelief; for along with making this objection they also made the absurd demand that each of them should be given a separately written scripture![2] As one scholar very aptly points out, one of the most distinctive features of the Qur'ân is that it "not only contains answers to all objections against it, but also adduces arguments of the truth of the assertions made. No other religious book of the world satisfies this require-

1. ﴿ ورتّلنـٰه ترتيلا ﴾ and ﴿ ونزّلنـٰه تنزيلا ﴾
2. See Q. 74:52.

ment, which circumstance alone places the Qur'ân above all scriptures..."[1]

Margoliouth makes other allegations too. Thus with reference to the incident of the Makkan leaders' sending two of their envoys to Madina to get the opinion of the Jews of that place about the Prophet Margoliouth says that since the questions that were suggested to the Quraysh to be put to the Prophet "concernd the Seven Sleepers and Alexander the Great, we may be sure that they were not suggested by the Jews."[2] Earlier he suggests that the story is "an anachronism", for the Prophet "began to quarrel with the Jews" after the migration to Madina. Before it, says Margoliouth, he used to appeal to them as a final authority and they also were on his side because, seeing the "danger of all Arabia becoming Christian" they even "deemed it sagacious to encourage a non-Christian teacher."[3] Margoliouth further alleges that as regards the reply about the Seven Sleepers the Prophet made a mistake about their number but "in a later edition of the surah" it was said that there were various opinions on the subject and that Allah knows best. Similarly, further writes Margoliouth, the Prophet, after having stated that "what is worshipped will be punished as well as the worshipper", brought a "fresh revelation" to make the necessary exception about Jesus."[4]

Now, it is true that disputes with the Jews developed after the migration; but that does not mean that the latter were on the Prophet's side during the Quraysh leaders' argumentation with him. The statement that the Jews even encouraged the Prophet to preach his teachings in view of the near-success of Christianity in Arabia is a pure surmise and is not borne out by the facts. Also the statement that the nature of the questions suggested to the Quraysh, namely, about the Seven Sleepers and Alexander the Great, precludes the prompters being Jews is not at all convincing. Margoliouth himself does not mention any reason why the Jews should have been shy of agitating those subjects. In any case, his allegation that the Prophet first gave one reply about the number of the sleepers and subsequently modified it in a "later edition of the surah", while "adhering to the number which he had originally given" is totally wrong. In fact Margoliouth makes here three misstatements,

1. Muhammad Ali, *The Holy Qur'an Arabic text, English translation and commentary,* seventh edition, Lahore, 1985, pp.702-703, n.1785.

2. Margoliouth, *op.cit,* 136-137.

3. *Ibid.,* 129.

4. *Ibid.,* 137.

namely, (a) that the Prophet originally gave a specific number; (b) that he subsequently modified it in a revised edition of the *sûrah*; and (c) that while revising he adhered to the original number, yet saying that Allah knows best. Each and everyone of these three assertions is untrue. The only *'âyah* of the *sûrah* which speaks about the number of the sleepers is 18:22. No specific number is given by the Prophet in it. It speaks only of the various opinions about it. There is no indication in the sources that this *'âyah* replaces an earlier *'âyah*. So there is no question of its being a revision or modification of an earlier statement. Similarly no adhering to the original number supposedly given earlier while emphasizing that Allah knows best about their number. Now, look at the *'âyah* which runs as follows:

﴿ سيقولون ثلـٰـثة رّابعهم كلبهم ويقولون خمسة سادسهم كلبهم رجما بالغيب ويقولون سبعة وثامنهم كلبهم قل رّبى أعلم بعدّتهم . . . ﴾

"Some would say they were three, the fourth of them was their dog; others say they were five, the sixth of them was their dog — guessing at the unknown — (yet) others say they were seven, their eighth was their dog. Say: My Lord knows best their number..." (18:22)

As regards Margoliouth's other statement relating to Jesus, it has reference to the Quraysh leaders' argumentation with the Prophet which is recorded by Ibn Isḥâq and the commentators.[1] It is related that on one occasion the Prophet, in the course of his discussion with a group of Quraysh leaders, recited unto them the *'âyah* 21:98 which says: "You and what you worship besides Allah shall be fuel for the hell-fire; you shall indeed come to that."[2] At this they were perturbed. Shortly afterwards another of their leaders, 'Abd Allah ibn al-Zaba'râ (al-Sahmî) came to them and told them to discomfit the Prophet by asking him whether, in that case, 'Uzayr and Jesus (peace be on them) whom the Jews and the Christians respectively worshipped would also be in hell. The Quraysh leaders much relished this suggestion and posed it to the Prophet. It is reported that in reply to this question of the unbelievers the *'âyahs* 21:101-103 were revealed which say in effect that those on whom Allah's favours had previously been bestowed would of course be far away from hell.[3] The passage is neither a modification of nor an "exception" made to what is wrongly supposed to be a

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 358-360; Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr,* XVII,76-77; Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr,* V, 374-376.
2. The text runs as follows: ﴿ إنّكم وما تعبدون من دون الله حصب جهنّم أنتم لها وٰردون ﴾
3. The text runs as follows: ﴿ إن الّذين سبقت لهم مّنّا الحسنىٰ أولـٰـئك عنها مبعدون ﴾

general and careless statement made in 21:98. The passage is in reality a pointer to the folly and mistake of the unbelievers themselves. As Ibn Kathîr points out, the *'âyah* 21:98 was addressed to the Makkan unbelievers and it spoke about them and what *they* worshipped. It did thus in no way refer to what the Jews and the Christians worshipped. Nor could Jesus and 'Uzayr (peace be on them), who themselves did neither exhort nor relish their being worshipped, be held accountable for what the others did towards them.[1] A second mistake on the part of the Quraysh leaders and those who adopt their view has been pointed out by Al-Ṭabarî. It is that the pronoun *mâ* (ما what) used in the expression *mâ ta'budûna* (ما تعبدون) relates only to inanimate objects with the clear implication that the idols that the Makkans worshipped were meant. If Jesus, 'Uzayr or others were meant, the pronoun *man* (من = whom) would have been used instead.[2] The folly and mistake of the Makkans are also pointed out by the Qur'ân itself in 43:58 which runs as follows:

﴿وقالوا ءأ'لهتنا خير أم هو ما ضربوه لك إلّا جدلا بل هم قوم خصمون﴾

"And they say: 'Are our gods better or he (Jesus)?' They did not cite him to you except by way only of disputation; rather they are a contentious people".

Margoliouth next takes up the Makkan unbelievers' objection to the resurrection of the body in the hereafter and says that "there are some very obvious objections" against the doctrine. He also refers in this connection to their demand for bringing their dead ancestors back to life and characterizes as "sophism" the Qur'ânic reply that such resurrection was no more difficult for Allah than the original creation of man. Margoliouth adds that this reply "left the matter precisely where it was."[3]

Here again Margoliouth simply endorses the unbelievers' views. He does not mention any of what he calls the "obvious objections" against this doctrine of resurrection. He also does not note that the Prophet did never claim for himself the competence or miraculous power to bring back the dead to life. He, or rather the Qur'ân, always asserted that it is Allah Who would resurrect the dead for judgement, reward and punishment. The reply given to the unbelievers' objection was thus just to the point. It was no "sophism"; nor did it leave the matter where it was.

Continuing his remarks on the same theme Margoliouth further states that

1. Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr,* V, 376.
2. Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr,* XVII, 77.
3. Margoliouth, *op.cit.*, 138-139.

the descriptions about the restoration of the body for reward and punishment were made not "without careless statements which gave rise to ribald criticisms; of which, if no other explanation was forthcoming", the Prophet would say "that the purpose had been to test the faith of the believers". Margoliouth further alleges that "if the imprudence committed had been too considerable the verse would be withdrawn" and the Prophet would say that to withdraw a revelation and substitute another for it was well within the power of Allah. "Doubtless it was", remarks Margoliouth, "but so obviously within the power of man that it is to us astonishing how so compromising a procedure can have been permitted to be introduced into the system by friends and foes."[1]

These remarks of Margoliouth's are based on a good deal of mixing up and twisting of the facts. Nowhere in the Qur'ân is the plea of testing "the faith of the believers" raised in extenuation of any careless statement regarding resurrection of the body and reward and punishment in the hereafter. If the allusion is to the *'âyah* 17:60 which has reference to *'isrâ'* and *mi'râj* then the remark is irrelevant in respect of both the essence of the incident as well as the text of the *'âyah* itself. The objection which the unbelievers are reported to have raised in this connection refers to the very fact of *'isrâ'* and *mi'râj* and not to resurrection, nor even to the scenes of paradise and hell which the Prophet is reported to have seen in the course of that miraculous event. More importantly, the *'âyah* says that the sight (*al-ru'yâ*) which the Prophet described is a *test* (fitnah) for men (*li al-nâs*) and not for the faithful, as Margoliouth states. If, on the other hand, the allusion is to 74:31, it is very clearly said there that the number mentioned is a test "for the unbelievers" and is on the contrary, intended to "increase the believers in their faith."[2] Similarly 21:111, which has reference to the unbelievers' impatiently asking for the threatened punishment to come on them, speaks of the respite given them as *fitnah* or test for them.[3] Indeed nowhere in the more than fifty places in the Qur'ân where the expression *fitnah* occurs in its various forms does it refer to any "careless" statement about the resurrection or hereafter; nor does it bear the sense of a test for the believers."[4] Margoliouth's remark

1. *Ibid.,* 139.
2. The text runs as follows: ﴿... ليستيقن الذين أوتوا الكتـب ويزداد الذين ءامنوا إيمانا...﴾
3. See for instance, Al-Shawkânî, *Tafsîr,* III, 431.
4. See the expression in Fuwâd 'Abd al-Bâqî, *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li-Alfâẓ al-Qur 'ân al-Karîm.*

in this respect is absolutely unwarranted.

Similarly there is no instance in the Qur'ân where a "careless" or "imprudent" statement with regard to either the resurrection or any other theme was withdrawn and substituted by another revelation. His statement that the Prophet would say that to withdraw a revelation was well within the power of Allah obviously refers to 2:106.[1] Margoliouth thus brings in the question of *naskh* as contained in the Qur'ân to bear on his discussion on the argumentation of the Makkan unbelievers and alleges that the Prophet had recourse to this procedure of revising or replacing a "careless" statement by another. The doctrine of *naskh* is indeed an important and difficult subject;[2] and it is neither feasible nor necessary to discuss it here. Margoliouth's twisting will be clear if it is simply noted that the *'âyah* he alludes to was revealed at Madina and it has no relation to the Makkan (or even Madinan) unbelievers argumentation with the Prophet; nor has it reference to any "careless" or "imprudent" statement regarding resurrection and life in the hereafter.

Finally, Margoliouth refers to the Makkan unbelievers' plea that if everything happened according to God's will then they were not to be held responsible for worshipping other objects besides Him; for if He did not so wish they would not have done it. Margoliouth states that this question of "freewill and determinism" occasioned some difficulty for the Prophet who was "too little of a philosopher to perceive the rigidity of this consequence" or the contradictory nature of the propositions. Hence, remarks Margoliouth, the Prophet insisted that every event was "designed by God" and at the same time warned men "of the consequences which would follow according to the course which they took."[3]

Thus does Margoliouth bring in the question of *qadr*, *qaḍâ'* or *mashy'a* in connection with the Makkan unbelievers' objections. This specific plea of

1. The tex runs as: ﴿ما ننسخ من ءاية أو ننسها نأت بخير منها أو مثلها...﴾

2. For a discussion on the subject see, for instance, Ibn al-Jawzî (Jamâl al-Dîn 'Abû al-Farj 'Abd al-Raḥmân), *Nawâsikh al-Qur'ân*, etc. Muḥammad Ashraf 'Alî al-Malyabârî, Madina Islamic University, Madina, 1404/1984; Muḥammad Makkî ibn 'Abî Ṭâlib al-Qaysî ('Abû Muḥammad, d. 437), *Al-'Îḍâh Li-Nâsikh al-Qur'ân wa Mansûkhihi*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥasan Farhât, Imam Muḥammad ibn Sa'ûd Islamic University, Riyadh, 1396 H. See also Shâh Waliullah al-Dehlawî, *Al-Fawz al-Kabîr Fî 'Uṣûl al-Tafsîr.*

3. Margoliouth, *op.cit.*, 140-141.

the unbelievers is alluded to in two Qur'ânic passages, 16:35 and 43:20 which run respectively as follows:

﴿وقال الّذين أشركوا لو شاء الله ما عبدنا من دونه من شيء نّحن ولا ءاباؤنا ولا حرّمنا من دونه من شيء... ﴾

"The polytheists say: 'If Allah had not so willed, we would not have worshipped anything except Him; neither we nor our fathers. Nor would we have held anything prohibited as against Him..." (16:35)

﴿وقالوا لو شاء الرّحمن ما عبدنـٰهم... ﴾

"And they (the polytheists) say: 'If the Most Merciful had so willed, we would not have worshipped them (the idols)..." (43:20)

In raising this plea the unbelievers did not at all intend to deny Divine will and to defend their "free-will". They just attempted to justify their idol worship saying that God must have been agreeable to their so doing, or else he would have caused some misfortune or punishment to befall them or their forefathers.[1] An appeal to the practice of their forefathers is also implicit in this plea of theirs, as is also the appeal to *qadr*. It is thus necessary to look at what the Qur'ân's reply was or is to this plea of the unbelievers. The reply is contained in the remainder of the two *'âyahs* mentioned above and in what immediately follows them. These run as follows:

﴿... كذ ٰلك فعل الّذين من قبلهم فهل على الرّسل إلا البلـٰغ المبين * ولقد بعثنا فى كل أمّة رّسولا أن اعبدوا الله واجتنبوا الطّـٰغوت فمنهم من هدى اللّه ومنهم من حقّت عليه الضّلـٰلة فسيروا فى الأرض فانظروا كيف كان عـٰقبة المكذّبين ﴾

"...Thus did act those before them. So is aught the duty of the Messengers (of Allah) except open preaching? And We indeed sent among every people a Messenger (with the behest): You all worship Allah and keep yourselves away from the false gods. Hence of them some Allah guided and on some of them misguidance prevailed. So travel through the earth and see what was the end of those who denied (the message)". (16:35-36)

﴿... مالهم بذ ٰلك من علم إن هم إلّا يخرصون * أم ءاتينـٰهم كتـٰبا مّن قبله فهم به مستمسكون * بل قالوا إنّا وجدنا ءابآءنا على أمّة وإنّا على ءاثـٰرهم مّهتدون * وكذ ٰلك ما أرسلنا من قبلك فى قرية مّن نّذير إلّا قال مترفوها إنّا وجدنا ءابآءنا على أمّة وإنّا على ءاثـٰرهم مّقتدون ﴾

"...They have no knowledge of that. They do naught but lie. Or have We given them a book before this so that they hold fast to it? Nay, they say: 'We found our fathers on a religion; and we are guided by their footsteps. Similarly, We did not send a warner to any habitation before you but that its leading ones said; 'Surely we found our fathers on a religion and verily we follow their footsteps'". (43:20-23).

1. Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr,* XIV,103; XXV, 59. Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr,* IV, 488-489. VII, 210.

It should be clear from the above that the reply thus given immediately to the unbelievers stresses three things. First, they were speaking from ignorance and lack of understanding in raising the plea of divine will and dispensation in justification of their polytheism. This plea of theirs was a lie and a fabrication on their part. Second, the divine will and directive in this respect had been made clear through His messengers to previous peoples to whom the message had been delivered all too clearly and specifically, asking man to worship none but Allah. If men were pre-consigned to guidance or error, there was no point in sending revelations and Messengers to them. Third, it is the same old plea which the previous generations raised while turning away from the truth that they found their forefathers on the religion which they were adhering to. In short, the Qur'ân says that to raise the plea of divine will and dispensation in defence of polytheism is utter ignorance and a downright falsehood about Allah; for He has clearly communicated His directive in this respect through His numerous Messengers.

In so far as the concept of *qadr* as contained in the Qur'ân is concerned, it is not coterminous with fatalism or determinism. The rigidity and irreconcilibility with free-will which Magoliouth supposes the concept involves are the creation of subsequent philosophers. If we extricate ourselves from the pedantry of the philosophers, we would see that the concept of *qadr* is neither antitehtical to free-will nor does it reduce man to an automaton absolving him of all responsibility for his acts. It is aimed at reminding him of the inadequacy of his faculties and capabilities and of the need for his ultimate dependence upon Allah's grace and mercy in every deed and effort. After all man's faculties and capabilities, even his free-will or ability to form any will, are all Allah's gifts. When, therefore, the Qur'ân says that Allah gives guidance to whomsoever He wills and withholds it from whomsoever He wills, it only means that since Allah has already communicated to man what guidance is and what constitutes misguidance and error, he should exercise his free-will and faculties to please Allah and seek His grace in getting guidance and in avoiding evil. Indeed guidance is only for the God-fearing: "It (the revelation, Qur'ân) is guidance for the God-fearing ﴿... هدى للمتقين﴾[1]. "We have shown him (man) the way; whether he be grateful or ungrateful (rests with his will) ﴿إنا هدينه السبيل إمّا شاكرا وإمّا كفورا﴾[2]. Divine

1. Q.2:2.
2. Q.76:3.

Will and Dispensation is thus rather a confirmation of man's free-will and individuality, than a negation of it. It is an incentive to effort and exertion combined with dependence on Allah and solicitation for His mercy and grace.

III. WATT AND THE UNBELIEVERS' OBJECTIONS

On his part Watt divides the Makkan unbelievers' objections into two categories — their "criticisms of the message" and "criticisms of Muḥammad's prophethood"[1]. In doing this, however, he deals with more or less the same items of objections as are mentioned by Margoliouth. In fact these divisions are also more or less those indicated by the latter.

Watt first refers to the unbelievers' criticism of the doctrine of resurrection, particlarly their objection to the restoration to life of the human body mouldered in grave. Watt quotes in this connection 37:13-17, in his own translation, and then remarks that the Makkans "described this restoring to life of mouldering bodies as magic".[2] In saying this Watt clearly misunderstands or misinterprets the passage he quotes. It does not bear out this sense at all. Its *'âyahs* 14-15 speak of the unbelievers' mocking at the revelation and of their characterizing it as magic, not of their characterizing the restoring to life of mouldering bodies as magic, which they had not obviously witnessed! The two *'âyahs* say: "And when they see a 'sign' they mock at it and say: 'This is but obvious magic'" [3]. The succeeding two *'âyahs*, 16-17, of the passage speak of their disbelief in resurrection. Watt has mistakenly related this disbelief with their remark about the 'sign', i.e., revelation, which they termed "magic" and which is mentioned in the two previous *'âyahs*.

Like Margoliouth Watt recognizes that the question of resurrection is connected with the doctrine of "the last Day and the resulting eternal reward and punishment". He further observes that the Makkans' rejection of this doctrine meant "that the sanction that was being introduced for the code of individual behaviour would remain ineffective".[4] This implication of their objection as noted here by Watt is correct; but it also means that one of their main reasons for their opposition to the Prophet was their unwillingness to

1. Watt, *M. at M.,* 127,131.
2. *Ibid.,* 124.
3. The two *'âyahs* run as follows: ﴿وإذ رأوا ءاية يستسخرون * وقالوا إن هذا إلّا سحر مّبين﴾
4. Watt *M., at M.,* 124.

accept a code of conduct based on individual accountability, instead of the life of unbridled licence they had been accustomed to[1] and that therefore their opposition to what is called "the message" started right from the beginning of the Prophet's mission and not after the alleged affair of the satanic verses as Watt so laboriously and incorrectly suggests. For, as he here admits, the "teaching about the last Day was part of the primary message of the Qur'ân" and as he further admits that the "verbal criticisms may have started long before the afafir of the satanic verses".[2] It cannot be argued that "verbal criticisms" of the message delivered by the Prophet and "opposition" to him were two distinct and successive developments. Watt's own thesis that the unbelievers' opposition consisted mainly of verbal criticisms combined with "mild" persecution militates against making such a distinction between "verbal criticisms" and "opposition". Here Watt simply nullifies his thesis about the beginning of opposition though he obviously fails to see it.

Like Margoliouth, again, Watt seems to justify the objections of the unbelievers. Thus with regard to their objection regarding the restoration of the mouldered body he says that this "seemed to them to be a crushing retort" to the Prophet's assertion, a "telling objection to the whole eschatological doctrine".[3] Further, referring to their question, "When is the Hour"? Watt says that the Qur'ân has answers or responses to it "which parry it", but it may have caused embarrassment to Muḥammad.[4] He further says that many of the Qur'ânic passages that "speak about God's 'signs' appear to be responses or reaction to the difficulty about the resurrection of the body", adding that the "stubborn opponents" of the Prophet "wre not convinced by the signs" and "retorted" by saying, "Produce our fathers, then".[5]

Of course the stubborn opponents of the Prophet were not convinced by the signs; but the assumptions that their question "When is the Hour"? or their demand to produce their fathers caused "embarrassment" to or "difficulty" for the Prophet are Watt's own conjectures. The assumptions are only indicative of an attitude identical with that of the unbelievers. For a "believer" in God objections to the doctrine of resurrection and the Day of

1. See *supra*, pp. 616-617.
2. Watt, *op.cit.*, 123.
3. *Ibid.*, 124.
4. *Ibid.*, 125. It may be recalled that Margoliouth terms the Qur'ân's responses to such questions as "sophism" which is said to have left the matter where it was.
5. *Ibid.*

Judgement should not pose any difficulty and should appear as only marks of contumacy on the part of the unbeliever.

"The other main focus of discussion", says Watt, was on the "question of idols and the unity of God" regarding which the Qur'ân took the initiative whereas the pagans, having no theoretical defence of idolatry, merely said that they were following in their fathers' footsteps. He recognizes that this reply of the unbelievers was not so much an accusation against the Prophet of his deviating from the way of the fathers as "a justification in general terms of their conservative outlook".[1] Having said so he suggests that the stories of the Prophets in the Makkan passages of the Qur'ân were partly "a counterblast to this claim to follow the steps of their fathers" and were intended to encourage the Muslims, who "must have felt they were deserting their ancestors" and to make them realize "that they had a distinguished spiritual heritage and that they were members of a community with roots deep in the past".[2]

The main purpose of the stories of the Prophets as related in the Qur'ân is to bring home the theme of monotheism and in that respect they also illustrate that Islam has a "distinguished spiritual heritage" with "roots deep in the past". But the statement that they were "a counterblast" to the unbelievers' claim "to follow the steps of their forefathers" is a mere conjecture on Watt's part based on his further conjecture that the "Muslims must have felt they were deserting their ancestors". This latter conjecture is not supported by any instance of such feeling or hesitation on the part of any early convert to Islam. Moreover, except for Ibrâhîm (p.b.h.) no ancestral lineage for the Arabs is claimed with regard to the many other Prophets mentioned in the Qur'ân. And since the Christians and Jews admit that Ya'qûb (Jacob), Mûsâ (Moses) and 'Îsâ (Jesus, p. b. on them) all preached the doctrine of monotheism the Qur'ân's relating it to their teachings was no counterblast as such to any particular claim by the unbelievers.

As regards the unbelievers' criticisms directed against the Prophethood of Muḥammad (ﷺ) and his claim to have received revelations from Allah, Watt refers to their allegations of the Prophet's being a *majnûn* (mad), a *kâhin* (soothsayer), a *sâḥir* (magician, sorcerer) and a *shâ'ir* (poet) and observes that all these allegations did not mean a denial that the Prophet's

1. *Ibid.*, 127.
2. *Ibid.*

"experiences had in some sense a supernatural cause", for underlying all these terms was the concept of being possessed by a spirit or jinn.[1] Watt also refers to the allegations that the Prophet either himself composed the Qur'ân or was helped by human assistants of whom they mentioned several persons. Watt justifies this allegation thus: "The historian will acknowledge Muḥammad's complete sincerity in his belief that the revelations came to him from outside himself," and will at the same time "admit as a possibility that prior to the revelation Muḥammad heard some of the stories recounted or alluded to in the Qur'ân from the alleged informants".[2]

Now, the objections to the theory of borrowed knowledge, particularly to the theory that the Prophet borrowed a knowledge of the Prophetic stories from the Jews and Christians whom he met in the course of his trade journeys and on other occasions have been noted earlier.[3] It has also been pointed out earlier[4] why since the middle of the nineteenth century the orientalists have emphasized the *sincerity* of the Prophet in his belief that he received revelation from outside himself. It may once again be pointed out here that they do so only to say that in spite of his own belief that the revelation was from outside himself, it was not really so. And Watt here does just that. It may therefore be once again pointed out that no impartial and unprejudiced historian who makes a comparison between the Prophetic stories as told in the Qur'ân and those occurring in the Bible can admit the possibility of the Prophet's recounting the stories after having heard them from the alleged informants. Nor, it should be emphasized, does the Qur'ân consist solely or mainly of the Prophetic stories.

Watt also attempts to justify and reconcile the obviously inconsistent allegations of the unbelievers that the revelation was a human production and at the same time it was magic (*siḥr*). Thus Watt states: The thought "is perhaps that the rhythmic and assonated prose is a spell produced by the sorcerer from his esoteric knowledge, and in this sense human; but he was doubtless supposed to have received the knowledge from the jinns".[5] The unbelievers' inconsistent statements about the revelation were a mark of their confusion,

1. *Ibid.*, 127-128.
2. *Ibid.*, 128.
3. *Supra*, Chap.XI. See spceially pp. 274-290.
4. See preface.
5. Watt, *M. at M.*, 129.

not of their consciously distinguishing between what is called the Prophet's "esoteric knowledge" and the knowledge which he was supposed to have received from the jinns.

Watt further recalls the unbelievers' allegation that the Prophet was not a sufficiently important person to be chosen by Allah as Prophet and that no human being could be a Prophet. Watt also refers to their demand for miracles and observes that though there is some variation in the precise nature of the miracles demanded, "the underlying assumption is always the same, namely, that the Divine can only be manifested in time through a disturbance in the natural order".[1] Watt here clearly appears to advance the Christian view of Divine manifestation. It can only be pointed out therefore that Prophethood is not a manifestation of the Divine. And precisely to guard against the mistake and confusion which led to the elevation of a Prophet to the rank of the Divine the Qur'ân emphasizes time and again that the Prophet was no more than a human being and that he was 's servant (*'abd*), not His manifestation or incarnation! Nor is the Divine "manifested" "through a disturbance of the natural order". Rather "natural order" itself is an unmistakable evidence of the Divine. The birth of a child through a mother alone is no more a disturbance of the natural order than the creation of the original man without father and mother. Be that as it may, here also Watt simply attempts to justify and reconcile the two inconsistent statements of the unbelievers that Muḥammad (ﷺ) was not a sufficiently important person to be a Prophet and that no human being could be a Prophet. Watt is also not quite correct in suggesting that "it was presumably another type of opponent" who advanced the latter objection. The same group of Quraysh leaders made the two inconsistent objections simply out of their confusion and contumacy.

Finally, Watt refers to the unbelievers' allegation of ambition on the Prophet's part and says that though, as the Makkan passages of the Qur'ân show, the Prophet "conceived his function as primarily religious, that of being a warner", in the Makkan situation such a function had political implications, and when events developed these implications to the point at which political action was necessary" he "did not shrink back, since he regarded the leadership thrust upon him as from God".[2] Yes, the Prophet ultimately

1. *Ibid.*, 129-130.
2. *Ibid.*, 130-131.

accepted political leadership which he regarded as thrust upon him by Allah. But that in no way substantiates nor justifies the unbelievers' allegation that he aimed at leadership by claiming himself to be a Prophet of Allah.

Such, in the main, is the treatment of the unbelievers' objections by the orientalists. They generally endorse or approve the objections of the Makkan opposition; while in their overall treatment of the Prophet's life they directly or indirectly adopt and develop the unbelievers' points of view. In all these the orientalists appear, on the one hand, to carry on and continue the views of the Makkan opposition and, on the othere, to advance their own view-points through the views of the unbelievers. Truly does the Qur'ân state: "Thus did those before them say similarly to their sayings. Their hearts are similar". ﴿... كذلك قال الّذين من قبلهم مّثل قولهم تشـبهت قلوبهم ...﴾[1]

1. Q.2:118.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE ABYSSINIAN MIGRATION AND THE ORIENTALISTS

The orientalists have divergent, almost mutually exclusive views about the Abyssinian migration. Thus while both Muir and Margoliouth entertain identical opinions about the cause and motive of the migration, Watt not only differs from them but advances a completely new theory about it. Similarly, though all of them uncritically accept the spurious story of the "satanic verses" as a fact, Margoliouth works it into building up one theory relating to an aftermath of the migration. Watt, as seen earlier, separates the story altogether from that affair and presses it into a theory regarding the beginning of opposition to the Prophet.

I. THE VIEWS OF MUIR AND MARGOLIOUTH

Both Muir and Margoliouth substantially accept the explanation given in the sources about the reasons for the migration and say that the Muslims migrated to Abyssinia because the situation had become intolerable for them at Makka. The resources of those who were independent among them, observes Margoliouth, "were insufficient to support the strain of their starving brethren, nor was the life of the latter endurable amid ceaseless vexations and persecutions".[1] Having said so, however, Margoliouth imputes an ulterior motive to the Prophet in sending his followers to Abyssinia. The imputation is apparently based on a hint given by Muir who, speaking not so much about the Prophet's motive as about the apprehensions of the Quraysh leaders writes: "What if the Najashi should support them [the Muslims] with an armed force, and seek to establish a Christian or reformed faith at Mecca, as certain of his predecessors had done in the Yemen"?[2] This hint is inflated by Margoliouth who states that the Prophet, in sending the emigrants to Abyssinia, "perhaps" looked forward "to seeing them return at the head of an Abyssinian army."[3] "There is little reason for doubting", he emphasizes a little later on, "that the founder of Islam, in sending his followers to Axum, designed some such denouement."[4] The reasosns for selecting the country were, according to Margoliouth, that "it had sent effective aid to the per-

1. Margoliouth, *op.cit.,* 156. See also Muir, *op.cit.,* (III edn.) 34-35.
2. Muir, *op.cit.*, 91.
3. Margoliouth, *op.cit.,* 157.
4. *Ibid.,* 166.

secuted Arabian Christians" and "had manifested detestation of the Meccan idolatry" by sending a force "to destroy the Ka'bah".[1] The allusions are to the Abyaainian intervention in Yaman more than half a century previously and to Abrahah's invasion of Makka shortly before the Prophet's birth.

Purely conjectural as the imputation is, it is justifiable neither by the facts nor by reason. It is far from correct to say that Abrahah's invasion against the Ka'ba was due primarily to his detestation of the Makkan idolatry. Nor was the situation in 614-15 any the more favourable for Abyssinia to re-enact her supposed Christian venture in Arabia. As Margoliouth himself notes a little earlier in his work,[2] the defeat at that time of the Christian Byzantines at the hands of the Persians had heightened what he calls the national spirit of the Arabs. Nor, it may be added, could the memory of the fiasco of 'Uthmân ibn al-Ḥuwayrith's attempt to capture political power at Makka with Byzantine backing have been forgotten there. Therefore no sensible Makkan could have thought of that suiçidal course of seeking foreign intervention in his land and city. Indeed Margoliouth himself in effect negatives his imputation a little later on when he says that the Prophet "was probably aware that such an invasion would be a doubtful advantage to himself, since the Abyssinians would conquer, if at all, for themselves."[3] Thus does Margoliouth first imagine and assume that the Prophet "perhaps" looked forward to an Abyssinian intervention and then, realizing the unwisdom of the supposed course of action, again imputes that realization to the Prophet. The whole thing takes place in Margoliouth's own imagination and the two contradictory statements merely indicate the stages of his own thinking. If the Prophet could realize that the Abyssinians would conquer only for themselves, he did so at the very start so that he did never look forward to seeing the emigrants "return at the head" or rather at the tail of an Abyssinian army.

In support of his assumption Margoliouth says further that a few years afterwards the Prophet "readily allied himself with another city — it is said — with the express object of fighting all the world in the cause of his religion."[4] The allusion is to the development mainly after the Prophet's migra-

1. *Ibid.,* 157.
2. *Ibid,* 119.
3. *Ibid.,* 170.
4. *Ibid.,* 166.

tion to Madina. Clearly Margoliouth fails to distinguish between the two situations and to see that what he cites in support of his view really constitutes its strongest refutation. The position at Madina is distinguished by the fact that the Prophet had first arranged for the migration of almost all his followers there and had finally betaken himself to that place. (In fact he had been driven out from his city). In the case of the migration to Abyssinia, he himself remained at Makka while the bulk of his followers went to that country. No sensible person would ever send out his followers to a foreign country with the plan of their coming back at the head of the army of that country while he himself remained within the grasp of his deadly enemies. Moreover, however much the cities might have been independent, Madina was not at all a "foreign" land. The Prophet of course built up his following and power there and also sent out reconnoitring missions in some directions, but in all the three major and decisive conflicts with the Makkans — Badr, 'Uḥud and Khandaq — it was the Makkans who had marched upon Madina rather than the Prophet who had gone up to Makka. And when he ultimately did so, public opinion at both the places and elsewhere within the peninsula had definitely turned in his favour so that the "conquest" of Makka was no more than a peaceful and bloodless take-over. It was essentially a victory of ideas over brute physical force and in no way a coming back at the head of a "foreign" army.

In advancing his assumption Margoliouth indeed makes a number of other self-contradictory propositions. Thus, while suggesting that the objective in sending the emigrants to Abyssinia was to persuade the latter to undertake an expedition into Arabia he says at the same time, drawing on the authority of Nöldeke, that it is not known whether the two sides understood each other's language.[1] Yet Margoliouth not only states that the Makkans were "in commercial relations with the state of Axum"[2] but also goes on to say that 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ, who went to Abyssinia on behalf of the Quraysh leaders to obtain extradition of the emigrants, had also previously been there and had on that previous occasion "revealed to the king the unfaithfulness of one of his queens" by way of avenging his ('Amr's) own wrong.[3] Surely the two sides then understood each other's language. An even stronger contra-

1. *Ibid.*, 156.
2. *Ibid.*, 157.
3. *Ibid.*, 159.

diction of the proposition is made in connection with Ja'far ibn 'Abî Ṭâlib's pleading of the Muslims' case at the Abyssinian court. It cannot be believed, says Margoliouth, that Ja'far translated the *sûrah* which he recited there and which "derives so much of its beauty from the rhyme". Hence, writes Margoliouth , "we may fancy the Abyssinian audience must have been able to guess at the meaning of a tale in a dialect so closely allied to their own."[1] Needless to point out that this fancying by Margoliouth contradicts his earlier fancying that the two sides hardly understood each other's language, in support of which he even cites the authority of Nöldeke!

Again, not trusting all that 'Umm Salamah (r.a.) says about the events at the Abyssinian court Margoliouth says that the indignant denial of the divine sonship of Jesus which *sûrah* XIX contains and which Ja'far recited there, was "without question an addition inserted at a later time", for the Prophet, according to Margoliouth, "avoided that thorny matter till it became politic for him to quarrel with Christians."[2] Further, Margoliouth rejects the report of the Abyssinian ruler's conversion to Islam and says that when the Muslims began to persecute the Christians, they were taunted with the memory of the help given by the Christian Negus. "Fictions were then excogitated", says Margoliouth," "showing how the Negus had been, not a Christian, but a follower of Islam."[3]

Both the above mentioned assumptions are unsubstantiated. Margoliouth does not cite any authority for his statement that the *'âyah* in question was inserted in *sûrah* XIX at a later date. Nor is it a fact that the Prophet differed from the Christians' doctrine about the divine sonship of Jesus at a subsequent date. That Allah does not have a progeny or son had been declared in earlier *sûrahs* as well.[4] Also the underlying assumption that the Qur'ânic passages were the Prophet's own compositions tailored to his convenience is totally wrong. As regards the Negus, the fact of his having believed in the Prophet and embraced Islam is stated in authentic reports, more particularly in the Negus's own communication to the Prophet.[5] As mentioned earlier, the Prophet, on receipt of the news of the Negus's death, even offered

1. *Ibid.*, 161.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. See for instance, Q. 112:3, 25:2.
5. See Muḥammad Ḥamîd Allah, *Majmu'at al-Wathâ'iq al-Siyâsiyyah li al-'ahd al-Nabawî wa al-Khilâfah al-Rashîdah,* sixth print, Beirut, 1987, pp.104-105.

funeral prayer on him in absentia.[1] The statement that the Muslims subsequently began to persecute the Christians is as groundless as is the conjecture that the story of the Negus's conversion was then "excogitated" in reply to the Christians' taunting the Muslims with the memory of earlier Christian help. But the most interesting aspect of Margoliouth's assumption is that he in effect contradicts it a little later on when he states that the Prophet and the Muslims played the "Abyssinian card" with great effect. "The Negus believed Mohammed was a Prophet; that fact could now be flaunted in advertisements", says Margoliouth, and the Makkans "found that Mohammed from being vexatious had become dangerous."[2] Clearly Margoliouth here bases his observation on the "fact" of the Negus's conversion and also admits indirectly that the story of the latter's conversion was not excogitated at a later date!

Finally, with regard the the story of "the satanic verses" Margoliouth not only accepts it uncritically as a fact, he also builds up a theory on it. He relates it to the ban and blockade against Banû Hâshim and states that the Prophet, having realized the "doubtful advantage" of an Abyssinian intervention and having found his resources strained by the ban, and also "probably" having "to bear many a reproach from the clansmen whom he had so seriously compromised", effected the compromise by making some concession to Al-Lat and Al-'Uzzâ and thus obtained the withdrawal of the ban and a recognition of his position as Allah's Prophet.[3] Margoliouth further says that the compromise, "which was regarded as the most discreditable episode in the Prophet's career", was "suppressed" in the chief edition of his biography; but in the edition which preserves it, the "release of the Hashimites from the ban is disconnected from the compromise" and ascribed to the action of certain tender-hearted individuals and to the role of worms.[4] He also says that the compromise, which to him "appears wise and statesmanly", was cancelled because the Prophet, "like others", could not control the spirits he had raised. Many of his followers, who were earnest and "accustomed to speak of Al-Lat and Al-'Uzzâ with contempt and abhorrence, refused to turn round so sharply" and admit the efficacy of the god-

1. *Supra,* p. 679.
2. Margoliouth, *op.cit.,* 169-170.
3. *Ibid.,* 170-171.
4. *Ibid.,* 171-172.

desses. Such persons — an Abyssinian refugee, or perhaps Omar — demanded the withdrawal of the concession." So the Prophet, who had "resigned himself to approving the Meccan polytheism", had "now to resign himself to declaring that he had made a mistake ..... The compromising verses were erased from the Surah, and an apology substituted."[1]

The question of the merit of the story itself has been discussed before.[2] Hence here only the faults in Margoliouth's assumptions and the unreasonableness of the theory as a whole would be pointed out. His premises and conclusions are equally wrong. With regard to his initial assumption on which he has built up this theory, namely, that the Prophet, having sent his followers to Abyssinia, "subsequently" realized the "doubtful advantage" of an Abyssinian intervention and therefore began to think of making a compromise with the Quraysh leaders is totally groundless. For, as shown above, the motive behind the migration to Abyssinia was not to procure that country's military help against the Makkan unbelievers; nor was the Prophet incapable of realizing from the very beginning what is called the doubtful advantage of such a venture. Similarly the reason given of his having been constrained by the exhaustion of his material resources or by the clamour of his disgruntled clansmen is nowhere indicated in the sources. It is simply Margoliouth's own imagination and it is inconsistent with what he himself says a little earlier about the ineffectiveness of the blockade. There he observes that the "Hashimites could obtain food, but at famine prices" and that the "careless generosity of the Meccans and their vacillating wills did much to render the blockade ineffective."[3] He also mentions in this connection the role of Muṭ'im ibn 'Adîyy and Hishâm ibn 'Amr in supplying food to the beleagured Hâshimites.[4] These and other facts, such as the suspension of the ban during the holy months, show that it was never really quite so effective as to necessitate a compromise on so vital an issue as the doctrine of monotheism.

Secondly, if the supposedly disgruntled clansmen of the Prophet had clamoured for obtaining the withdrawal of the ban, as Margoliouth imagines, and if persons like 'Umar had subsequently put pressure on the Prophet to withdraw the concession, as Margoliouth further suggests, the matter of the

1. *Ibid.,* 172-173.
2. *Supra,* Chapter XXIX.
3. Margoliouth, *op.cit.,* 168.
4. *Ibid.,* 168-169.

supposed compromise would have been the subject of prior discussion among the Prophet and his companions and it would have found some mention in the sources. A highly intelligent and "shrewd" judge of human character as Margoliouth maintains the Prophet was, he would not have, without consulting his companions or gauging their opinions in some way, first "resigned himself to approving the Meccan polytheism" and subsequently to have again "resigned himself to declaring that he had made a mistake." Such "tergiversation", to use Margoliouth's expression, would have led earnest souls like 'Umar to renounce Islam and the Prophet's leadership and it would never have ensured the zeal and devotion with which they followed him throughout the rest of their lives.

Thirdly, it is an illogical surmise on Margoliouth's part that the episode of the compromise was suppressed in the chief edition of the Prophet's biography because it was regarded as the most discreditable episode in his life, while in the edition in which it is preserved it is disconnected from the release of the Hâshimites from the ban and the latter event is ascribed to the action of certain individuals, etc. Now, if the edition in which the story is preserved did so by disregarding the fact that the episode of the compromise is most discreditable to the Prophet, there is no reason why it should not have mentioned the supposed pressure put on the Prophet by the supposed disgruntled clansmen and also the supposedly subsequent pressure put by the earnest souls like 'Umar to withdraw the concession. It is also not logical that this very edition should have concocted a less discreditable story, that of the role of certain individuals, in explaining the withdrawal of the ban. It may also be recalled that the same individuals like Muṭ'im ibn 'Adiyy and Hishâm ibn 'Amr who are recognized by Margoliouth to have been active in supplying provisions to Banû Hâshim disregarding the ban, were the very individuals who took the initiative to put an end to it. It is thus obvious that they were not quite in favour of the ban from the very start and that naturally they were the ones to take the lead in cancelling it.

Finally, Margoliouth says that the "compromising verses were erased from the Surah, and an apology substituted". The "apology" and substitute which he mentions[1] is in fact a garbled summary of 22:52. This *'âyah*, as noted earlier,[2] does in no way relate to the supposed revocation of the alleged "satanic verses". Whatever construction is put on this *'âyah*, the very

1. *Ibid.*, 173.
2. *Supra*, pp. 686-695.

fact that it does not occur in *sûrat al-Najm* in which the alleged "satanic verses" were supposedly interpolated, and that it (22:52) was revealed at a much later time disprove the contention that it is a substitute for the "satanic verses."

II. WATT'S THEORIES REGARDING THE ABYSSINIAN MIGRATION

Watt's views about the Abyssinian migration resolve into two theories, namely, his theory about the two migrations or rather the two lists of emigrants and his theory about the cause and motive behind the migration.

Regarding the first theme Watt accepts and reproduces Caetani's reasons for rejecting the view that there were two *hijrahs* to Abyssinia. The main reason, says Watt, is that Ibn Isḥâq "does not in fact say that there were two *hijrahs*", but simply states that the first Muslims to set out were so and so (with the names of ten adults and their dependants) and says: "Then Ja'far b.'Abî Ṭâlib set out, and the Muslims followed him one after another.....", finally giving a list of 83 males, including those in the first list.[1] Watt further says that there "is no mention of the first list returning in order to go back a second time," nor are the lists in order of priority in travelling to Abyssinia, but "presumably" in the order of precedence "in the public registers of the Caliphate." On these grounds Watt states that "there were not two large parties but a number of smaller groups", "a single stream of emigrants." He explains the two lists given by Ibn Isḥâq by saying that "there were two lists extant in his time of people who had gone to Abyssinia, but that he was uncertain about the exact relation to the two lists."[2] Watt mentions in this connection the system of state annuities given initially in accordance with the date of a man's adhesion to Islam and his services in the cause of it. Watt thinks that probably at some time the highest class had been the *muhâjirûn*. Subsequently 'Umar revised the list in 15 H. giving priorities to the Prophet's family and household and those who fought at Badr, relegating those who had returned from Abyssinia at the time of Khybar (7 H.) to two classes below the Badrites. Watt further alludes to the claim made by some at that time of having made two *hijrahs*, one to Abyssinia and the other to Madina. He suggests that the two lists given by Ibn Isḥâq are relics of this controversy over priorities in respect of the distribution of the state annuities.[3]

1. Watt, *M. at M.*, 110-111.
2. *Ibid.*, 111.
3. *Ibid.*, 111-112.

Now, admitting the facts mentioned in connection with the question of annuities and also the reports about certain companions' claiming to have performed two *hijrahs* to their credit, namely, one to Abyssinia and the other to Madina, and also recalling the Prophet's remark regarding the returnees from Abyssinia in 7 H. that they too had two *hijrahs* to their credit, one to Abyssinia and the other from there to himself at Madina, these facts in no way go to explain the two lists or the question of two migrations to Abyssinia. For, neither any Companion nor the Prophet claimed any extra merit for two migrations to Abyssinia. The two migrations spoken of were always with reference to one to Abyssinia and the other to Madina; never with reference to two migrations to the same place. The whole argument about annuity is thus beside the mark and is of no use in explaining either the two lists or the fact of two migrations to Abyssinia. The latter view (that of two migrations to Abyssinia) is based not on the facts adduced by Watt but on the fact of the return of all or most of the first batch of emigrants to Makka after a couple of months' stay in Abyssinia in the first instance and then their again going to that country followed by others in groups over a period of time so that their number ultimately reached about one hundred. Watt ignores this fact of the return of the first batch of emigrants and as such is clearly mistaken in asserting that there "is no mention of the first batch returning in order to go back a second time." Of course Ibn Isḥâq does not say that the first batch of emigrants returned "in order to go back a second time"; but he very prominently mentions their return after a short while. It is also clear from his account and from other sources that many of this first batch remigrated to Abyssinia and were followed by others. This fact of the return of the first batch of emigrants and their remigration to Abyssinia is referred to as the two migrations there. Neither any Companion of the Prophet nor he himself ever implied any extra merit for one's having migrated twice to the same place, Abyssinia.

Equally untenable is Watt's theory about the motive and cause of the migration to Abyssinia. As regards this he rejects the view that hardships and persecution were the reason for the migration and states: "one could hardly suggest that these early worthies of Islam were moved chiefly by fear of suffering."[1] He brings in his favourite theme of rivalry between the *Ḥilf al-Fuḍûl* group of clans and the group round Banû Makhzûm and Banû 'Abd

1. *Ibid.*, 113.

Shams and attempts to cast the Abyssinian migration too in that matrix. He says that those who migrated to Abyssinia belonged, "with two exceptions" to the latter group. On this basis he states that the *Ḥilf al-Fuḍûl* group of clans, seeing that the Prophet "was primarily attacking the high finance which they also disliked", did not have the same eagerness to persecute the Muslims, which, according to Watt, "consisted in bringing pressure to bear on them from within the clan and even within the family", as the Makhzûm and 'Abd Shams group had. And that is why converts from this latter group of clans migrated to Abyssinia.[1] Watt's mistake about the nature of persecution upon the Muslims has been pointed out earlier.[2] Here it may only be said that in thus stating the case he in effect supports the view that persecution was the underlying cause of the migration, whatever might have been the nature of the persecution and by whomsoever it might have been inflicted or on whomsoever its brunt might have fallen. It has also been shown earlier[3] that his theory of continued rivalry between two groups of Quraysh clans as an explanation of the phenomenon of Islam is neither correct nor tenable. Nor is it a fact that the *Ḥilf al-Fuḍûl* group of clans were more sparing in their hostility to the Muslims of their own clans.

Watt of course brings other arguments to bear on his theory. Thus, after having rejected, and very rightly, the theories suggested by "Western scholars" that the Prophet sent away his followers to Abyssinia in order to "remove them from the danger of apostasy", or that they went there in order to engage in trade, or that the Prophet, in sending them there, hoped to get military help from the Abyssinians, Watt suggests that the most weighty reason for the migration was the growth of "a sharp division of opinion within the embryonic Islamic community."[4] As evidence of this division of opinion he states that 'Uthmân ibn Maẓ'ûn, who is mentioned by Ibn Hishâm as the leader of the emigrants to Abyssinia, and who had originally come to the Prophet with four friends, was "almost certainly" the leader of a group and "was in some sense a rival to the group led by 'Abû Bakr." For, at a later date, 'Umar remarked that he thought little of 'Uthmân because he died in his bed, and this, according to Watt, was "a ralic of the rivalry between

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Supra,* pp. 747-756.
3. *Supra,* Chap. IX.
4. Watt, *M. at M.,* 114-115.

'Uthmân b. Maẓ'ûn and the group of 'Abû Bakr and 'Umar."[1]

As other hints of differences among the early Muslims Watt cites the instance of Khâlid ibn Sa'îd of 'Abd Shams, who is said to have been the first to go to Abyssinia but who did not return till Khaybar and showed "some hostility to Abû Bakr" after the Prophet's death.[2] Another instance cited is "the case of al-Ḥajjâj b. al-Ḥârith b. Qays", whom Watt identifies with Al-Ḥârith ibn al-Ḥârith ibn Qays, and says that he was taken prisoner fighting against the Muslims at Badr but who was one of the emigrants to Abyssinia. "If one emigrant to Abyssinia adopted such an attitude", says Watt, "may not others have done so?"[3] Finally, he mentions that Nu'aym ibn 'Abd Allah al-Naḥḥâm was a prominent early Muslim but "a coolness seems to have sprung up between him and the main body [of Muslims], which was primarily Abû Bakr's party"; for Nu'aym "did not go to Madina until A.H.6."[4] Watt says that those who went to Abyssinia were "men with genuine religious convictions" and such men "would be disinclined to accept the policy of Abû Bakr" which "may have been the insistence" that the Prophet "must be accepted as political as well as religious leader because of the socio-political implications of the message he proclaimed", with the "probable implication that Abû Bakr was to be second in command". And since those who migrated to Abyssinia belonged to clans ouside the *Ḥilf al-Fuḍûl* group, they did so because they were not "ready to follow a leader from the clan of Hâshim in view of the old *Ḥilf al-Fuḍûl*."[5] Watt further says that the statement that the Prophet took the initiative in the matter of the migration "may be an attempt to conceal base motives among those who abandoned him in Mecca". Also, it "is in accordance" with the Prophet's "character that he should quickly have become aware of the incipient schism and taken steps to heal it by suggesting the journey to Abyssinia...."[6]

Thus does Watt make use of his favourite theme of the rivalry between two groups of Quraysh clans to explain the Abyssinian migration, or rather he fits the latter incident into the former theme. His treatment is clearly

1. *Ibid.*, 115.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, 115-116.
4. *Ibid.*, 116.
5. *Ibid*, 116-117.
6. *Ibid.*, 117.

vitiated by an inherent contradiction and employment of double standards on the one hand, and by mis-presentation of the facts, on the other.

As regards the first, it may by pointed out that he has been saying on the one hand, and rightly, that the Prophet's "message" had socio-political implications and that in the then Makkan (or rather world) situation political leadership could not be separated from the religious. And he treats this fact as one of the main reasons for the Qyraysh leaders' opposition to the Prophet. But in explaining the conversion to Islam of the young men from the non-*Ḥilf al-Fuḍûl* group of clans, or whom he calls "the younger sons of the best families", as well as their migration to Abyssinia, he labours under the modern concept of a distinction between "religion" and "politics" (or rather Church and State) and applies that standard to those young men, assuming that their action was guided by an awareness of that distinction. Thus, speaking earlier about their conversion Watt states that when they embraced Islam "there was probably no explicit awareness that economic and political factors were involved in what they were doing" and that the "religious" aspect of the "message" determined their ethos.[1] Now, in explaining their migration to Abyssinia Watt says that they, being at last aware of the political implication of the "message" and being at the same time not ready to accept the political leadership of a Hâshimite, betook themselves to a foreign land! In both the cases Watt makes them make a distinction between "religion" and politics". Thus does Watt apply one standard in analysing the attitude of the Quraysh leaders and another standard in explaining the attitude of their younger sons. He conveniently overlooks the fact that such a distinction simply did not exist at the time and that those sons of the "best families" could not have failed to see the socio-political impications of the "message" while their parents, and even 'Abû Bakr, clearly recognized them (the implications). Watt also overlooks the inherent contradiction in his sugegstion. If the "message" had socio-political implications, as it indeed had, those intelligent sons of the best families could not just have accepted it ignoring its socio-political implications or by separating them from it. In fact they embraced Islam knowing full well all its implications including the leadership of the Prophet in all matters. Watt makes half-fools of them when he holds them unaware of or unconcerned about the socio-political implications of Islam at the time of their embracing it, and also when he says that being at

1. *Ibid.,* 97. See also *supra,* pp. 601-602.

last aware of those implicatiions they chose the course of self-exile instead of abandoning what they thought to be the "religious" aspect of the "message". If their dislike of the "political" leadership of the Prophet was so deep and strong as to make them prefer leaving their own homes and society they would rather have completely forsaken the Prophet and Islam rather than accept a half and a half of each.

Watt is aware that his theory is inconsistent with the well-known fact that it was the Prophet who suggested to his followers to betake themselves to Abyssinia. Hence Watt attempts to explain away this inconsistency by saying that the statement that the Prophet took the initiative in the matter "may be an attempt to conceal base motives among those who abandoned him in Mecca." Who should thus have attempted to conceal the supposed base motives and why are not explained by Watt; but he quickly shifts his ground and states that "it is not necessary to interpret the data in this way". For, according to him, it was in accordance with the Prophet's character that "he should quickly have become aware of the incipient schism and taken steps to heal it by suggesting the journey to Abyssinia." Thus would Watt have us take in the same breath that the young men of the best families "abandoned" the Prophet at Makka because they did not like his "political" leadership and that it was the Prophet who, in order to quickly heal the "incipient schism" suggested the journey to Abyssinia! Now, if the so-called schism was only incipient, there would have been no need for the Prophet to take the rather extreme measure of virtually expelling the greater part of his followers under the pretext of promoting the cause of Islam. He could easily have avoided the supposed incipient schism from developing into a crack by simply keeping a low profile of the political implications of his message. If, on the other hand, the supposed schism had in any way appeared on the surface, why should the "political" non-conformists have readily submitted to the order of exile without raising a voice of protest or objection against it? Why, again, should the Prophet's own daughter and son-in-law (Ruqayyah and ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Affân) and cousin Ja‘far ibn ’Abî Ṭâlib (r.a.) also have been among the first batch of emigrants to Abyssinia? Most important of all, why, also, should ’Abû Bakr himself have started to migrate to that land and travelled a considerable distance when he was persuaded by Ibn al-Dughunnah to return to Makka by standing surety for him? Watt takes note of the fact of Ibn al-Dughunnah's having stood surety for ’Abû Bakr[1] but ignores the other

1. watt, *M. at M.*, 118.

and more important facts connected with the episode. In fact Watt's basic assumption that at that early stage when the fate of Islam was still uncertain 'Abû Bakr insisted on the acceptance of the Prophet's political leadership with the implication that he himself should be the second in command is totally unwarranted. There is no indication in the sources that he did so, nor that the Prophet so employed him in order to make his (the Prophet's) political leadership accepted by the converts. The base motive attributed directly to 'Abû Bakr, and indirectly to the Prophet, is utterly unjustified. Watt simply projects the subsequent greatness of 'Abû Bakr and 'Umar (r.a.) into the past.

The theory as a whole is inconsistent also with another fact admitted by Watt himself, namely, that the migration to Abyssinia took place over a period of time extending over at least a couple of years during which a "stream" of "small groups" went there. Other objections to the theory have been pointed out by W. Arafat.[1] He very rightly mentions that Watt has unjustifiably inflated the personality of 'Uthmân ibn Maẓ'ûn. It is Ibn Hishâm and not Ibn Isḥâq who says that 'Uthmân ibn Maẓ'ûn was the leader of the emigrants to Abyssinia. "There is no hint of an instance where he tried to assert his leadership or opposition." The inference drawn by Watt that 'Umar's reported remark about 'Uthmân ibn Maẓ'ûn was a "relic of enmity between him and the faction led by 'Abû Bakr and 'Umar" is totally groundless. 'Umar, by all accounts, embraced Islam after the migration of the first batch of Muslims, including 'Uthmân ibn Maẓ'ûn, to Abyssinia. Thus, whatever might be the implications of 'Umar's reported remark about the latter, it could not have been "a relic" of the enmity between 'Uthmân and "the faction led by Abû Bakr and 'Umar"; for the supposed "faction led by Abû Bakr and 'Umar" did not simply exist prior to 'Umar's conversion to Islam. Moreover, the story of 'Umar's remark about 'Uthmân as related by Ibn Sa'd shows that 'Umar was in fact "merely relating how when 'Uthmân died in his bed (A.H.2), he suffered 'a great downfall' in his ('Umar's) estimation, but that when later on the Prophet and 'Abû Bakr died in the same way, 'Uthmân was restored in his ('Umar's) esteem. Thus the story implies the opposite view to that expressed by Watt."[2]

Similarly far-fetched is the argument based on the instance of Khâlid ibn

1. *The Islamic Quarterly,* (London), Vol. I, No.3, October 1954, pp. 182-184.
2. *Ibid.,* 183.

Sa'îd (of 'Abd Shams) who did not return from Abyssinia till Khaybar (7 H.) and who is said to have shown "some hostility to Abû Bakr" after the Prophet's death. The fact that Khâlid returned after Khaybar is no argument in support of his supposed hostility to 'Abû Bakr. The Prophet's own cousin Ja'far ibn 'Abî Ṭâlib, who was rather the leader and spokesman of the emigrants to Abyssinia, was among the last to return. On the other hand 'Uthmân ibn Maẓ'ûn himself, whom Watt makes out the leader of the supposed anti-'Abû Bakr faction, returned shortly afterwards and was among those who migrated to Madina and faught at Badr along with the Prophet and 'Abû Bakr. Watt of course attempts to explain away this inconsistency by suggesting that "there never was a complete break between them and Muḥammad" (ﷺ) and that there was a "comparatively speedy reconciliation" between them.[1] One can only point out that if there was no "complete break" and if the "incipient schism" was ended by a "comparatively speedy reconciliation", then why cite the instance of Khâlid ibn Sa'îd's stay in Abyssinia till Khaybar as evidence of his and other's disagreement with the Prophet's policy? The fact is that the supposed incipient schism and the supposed speedy reconciliation are both Watt's own supposition. Like Margoliouth who supposes that the Prophet planned to get Abyssinian military intervention and then realizing that the Abyssinians would conquer only for themselves attributes that realization to the Prophet, Watt also makes an imagination and finding it contradicted by the facts throws out another supposition, attriluting both to the Prophet or his companions.

As regards Watt's identifying Al-Ḥajjâj ibn al-Ḥârith ibn Qays with Al-Ḥârith ibn al-Ḥârith ibn Qays, W. Arafat correctly points out that it is a "case of mixed identity". If the reports of various authorities are to be weighed, certainly Ibn Isḥâq's evidence is the weightiest, and "he has no doubt that these are two distinct persons".[2] Similarly the instance of Nu'aym ibn 'Abd Allah al-Naḥḥâm cited by Watt to illustrate the supposed opposition to 'Abû Bakr's faction is irrelevant. For, as Watt himself recognizes, Nu'aym did not migrate to Abyssinia at all. Nor is the fact of his having migrated to Madina in 6 H. any evidence of his dislike of 'Abû Bakr or of the existence of a faction as such. Moreover, Ibn Sa'd states that Nu'aym stayed at Makka at the insistence of his own needy clan, who allowed him

1. Watt, *M. at M.,* 117.
2. W. Arafat, *op.cit.,* 183.

freedom of his faith. "It is possible that he felt that by emigrating he would be betraying the poor of his clan."[1]

Thus, like the others of Watt's numerous theories this one too is untenable and revolves round the old view of Muir, Margoliouth and others that the Prophet aimed at political leadership from the very beginning and the view that his rise and the other developments are related to the age-old rivalry between two groups of Quraysh clans, to substantiate which Watt only makes contradictory propositions and suppositions.

1. *Ibid.*

SECTION VII

THE LATE MAKKAN PHASE AND MIGRATION TO MADINA

CHAPTER XXXV

LOOKING BEYOND MAKKA FOR SUPPORT

I. THE VISIT TO ṬÂ'IF

It has already been mentioned that shortly after 'Abû Ṭâlib's and Khadîjah's (r.a.) death 'Abû Lahab emerged as the leader of Banû Hâshim.[1] As will be seen presently,[2] already before these developments, in fact during the continuance of the boycott, the Prophet had started looking beyond Makka and approaching the various tribes of Arabia for protection and support. And now that 'Abû Lahab was the leader, the solidarity of Banû Hâshim and Banû Al-Muṭṭalib on the issue of the Prophet's protection broke down and the clan virtually abandoned him. This added an urgency to the need for seeking support from other quarters; for the Prophet's position was no longer tenable at Makka. In fact he appears to have been ousted from the town. Hence he turned his immediate attention to the sister town of Ṭâ'if,[3] situated some sixty miles to the east of Makka, on a comparatively fertile plateau on a cluster of mountains. He went there personally towards the end of Shawwâl in the tenth year of the mission to seek the protection and support of its people.

Accompanied only by his trusted friend and freed slave Zayd ibn Hârithah[4] the Prophet proceeded to Ṭâ'if. For about a month he stayed at that place approaching its people for support and calling them towards Allah and Islam. Banû al-Tahqîf were the main inhabitants of the town and their leaders were three brothers, 'Abd Yâlîl, Mas'ûd and Ḥabîb, sons of 'Amr ibn 'Umayr ibn 'Awf. One of these brothers had married a Qurayshite lady of Makka, Ṣafiyyah bint Ma'mar of Banû Zuhrah. The Prophet specially approached these three brothers and sought their support and help as against the opposition and enmity of the Makkan unbelievers. They not only turned a deaf ear to his request but even abused him and ridiculed him. It is said that in the course of his talk with them one of the brothers sarcastically

1. *Supra.* p. 713.

2. See below, seetion II of this chapter.

3. Ibn Sa'd, I., 210-211.

4. Ibn Isḥâq states that the Prophet went there all alone (Ibn Hishâm, I, 419); but this seems to be incorrect.

remarked that he would tear off the covering of the Ka'ba if the Prophet was indeed Allah's Messenger! Another brother remarked whether Allah did not find any other person to appoint as His Messenger; while the third brother remarked that if he (the Prophet) was really Allah's Messenger he was too high to dispute with; but if he was lying against Allah he was not worthy to talk to.[1]

Being sadly disappointed about them he requested them to at least keep the matter of his talk with them confidential. But they did not concede to him even that little of courtesy. Instead, they created a row over it and instigated their servants, followers and fellow inhabitants of the town to abuse and assault the Prophet and to drive him out of the place. As he at last started leaving the town the inhabitants and street urchins, being instigated by the leaders, lined up along the road, shouting abuses to him and stoning him ruthlessly, aiming particularly at his legs. Zayd ibn Ḥârithah attempted to protect him and shield him against the incessant showers of stones and was in the process himself badly wounded in the head. The Prophet's both legs were similarly wounded and bled heavily. But whenever he sat down being unable to walk, the urchins forced him to stand up and to continue walking. Being thus hooted and pursued for about three miles in the outskirts of the town the Prophet was at last unable to walk. Zayd managed to carry the Prophet on his shoulder and to hurry to a comparatively safer place by the side of a grape orchard and made him recline against its wall. The orchard belonged to 'Utbah and Shaybah, sons of Rabî'ah of Makka. These two persons happened to be present in their orchard. Most probably they had gone to Ṭâ'if to instigate its leaders against the Prophet.[2] Seeing the condition of the Prophet, however, they took pity on him and sent one of their servants, 'Addâs, with a plate of grapes and instructed him to ask the Prophet to eat them. 'Addas was originally from Ninevah and a Christian. He came to the Prophet and offered him the grapes and requested him to eat them. As the Prophet started eating them in the name of Allah (saying *Bismillah*) 'Addâs was surprised and started talking to him. The Prophet's conversation, specially his reference to Prophet Yûnus (p.b.h.) impressed 'Addâs who, out of

1. Ibn Hishâm, I,419; Al-Bayhaqî, *Dalâ'il,* II, 415.

2. Most probably it is to this incident of 'Utbah's and Shaybah's presence at Ṭâ'if that 'Urwah ibn al-Zubayr refers when he says: "there came from al-Ṭâ'if some Quraysh people, men of property, and instigated their followers against the Prophet", etc. See *supra,* p.717 ff. 'Urwah obviously mixes up the incident a little.

intense respect, kissed the Prophet's hand and feet. 'Utbah and Shaybah noticed their servant's behaviour from a distance. When therefore he returned to them they asked him earnestly not to forsake his ancestral religion which, they added, was better than the Prophe's religion.[1]

When the Prophet recouped his energy a little he made a fervent prayer to Allah appealing to Him against his own inability and insufficiency and seeking His pleasure in lieu of all the hardships and difficulties that beset him. This prayer sheds a brilliant light on his depth of feeling and love for his people, his faith and sincerity of purpose and his complete reliance on Allah. The prayer runs to the following effect:[2]

"O my Lord! I complain to Thee against the insufficiency of my own power, the meagreness of my own capacity and my inability against my people. O The Most Merciful of the Merciful, You are the Lord of the weak; and you are my Lord. To whom are you consigning me? To a distant one who treats me with harshness, or to an enemy whom you have enabled to domineer over my affairs. If You are not displeased with me, I do not care; but if I receive Your satisfaction, that is of more value to me. I seek protection with the Light of Your Countenance, which enlightens all darknesses and on account of which the affairs of this world and of the hereafter are in order, against Your wrath befalling me, or Your displeasure descending on me. I submit to Your will till You are pleased with me. There is no power and no strength except through You".

The prayer is remarkable in being free from any complaint or anger against those people who had so badly treated the Prophet. It is indicative of the broadness of his mind and the sublimity of his character and mission. The treatment he had received at Ṭâ'if was the worst he had received so far from the unbelievers. At a later date when 'Â'ishah (r.a.) enquired of him whether he had encountered any other difficult situation comparable to the battle of 'Uḥud, he told her that the treatment he had received at Ṭâ'if was the worst situation he had faced in his life.[3]

1. Ibn Hishâm, I,420,421.; Ibn Kathîr, *Al-Bidâyah wa al-Nihâyah,* III, 135-136. Al-Bayhaqî, *Dalâ'il,* II, 415-416.

2. Ibn Hishâm, I, 420; Al-Ṭabarî, *Târikh,* II, 346 (I/1201); Al-Haythamî, *Majma' al-Zawâ'id,* VI, 38,39; Al-Qurṭubî, *Tafsîr,* XVI, 211. The text of the prayer runs as follows:

(اللهمّ إليك أشكو ضعف قوّتي، وقلّت حيلتي، وهواني على النّاس، ياأرحم الرّاحمين، أنت ربّ المستضعفين، وأنت ربّي، إلى من تكلني، إلى بعيد يتجهّمني؟ أم إلى عدوّ ملكته أمري؟ إن لّم يكن بك عليّ غضب فلا أبالي، ولكنّ عافيتك هي أوسع لي، أعوذ بنور وجهك الذي أشرقت له الظّلمات وصلح عليه أمر الدّنيا والآخرة من أن تنزل بي غضبك أو يحلّ عليّ سخطك لك العتبى حتّى ترضى ولا حول ولا قوّة إلّا بك)

3. *Bukhârî,* nos, 3231, 7389; *Muslim,* no. 1795; Al-Bayhaqî, *Dalâ'il,* II, 417; 'Abû Nu'aym, *Dalâ'il,* 281-282.

After taking a little rest the Prophet retraced his steps towards Makka. As he reached Qarn al-Ṭha'âlib (or Qarn al-Manâzil)[1] his attention was drawn towards the sky by a piece of cloud shading him. As he looked up he saw the angel Jibrîl there. The latter addressed him saying that Allah had observed all that the people had done to him and that therefore He had deputed the angel in charge of mountains to carry out his wish in repect of his unbelieving people. The other angel then tendered his *salams* to the Prophet and told him that Allah had commissioned him to carry out his (the Prophet's) wish. If he so desired, the two mountains of Makka ('Abû Qubays and Quwayqu'ân) would be uprooted and thrown on those unbelieving people. The Prophet declined the suggestion and said instead that he hoped that Allah would raise from among their descendants those who would worship Him Alone and would not set any partner with Him.[2]

The reply thus given by the Prophet to the angel's suggestion is an indirect corroboration of the report of his prayer given above and shows that even at the height of their opposition and ill treatment towards him the Prophet did not want any revenge on his unbelieving people nor any punishment falling on them. It also shows that even at the darkest hour he did not lose heart and was optimistic about the ultimate acceptance of the truth by his people. And history proves how right he was in his expectation and confidence. The incident was also in the nature of a consolation and reassurance by Allah to His Messenger that his activities and steps were being overseen and that His help would be forthcoming whenever necessary.

The Prophet next stopped at the valley of Nakhlah. Here at night when he was praying a party of *jinn* passed by him and heard his recitation of the Qur'ân. They were so impressed by it that they believed in it and in his mission; and on their return to their compatriots disseminated the message of Islam among them.[3] This incident is clearly referred to in Q. 46:29-32 (*sûrat al-Aḥqâf*) and 72:1-2 (*sûrat al-Jinn*). The initial *'âyahs* of the two pasasges run respectively as follows:

﴿وإذ صرفنا إليك نفرا مّن الجنّ يستمعون القرءان فلمّا حضروه قالوا أنصتوا فلمّا قضى ولّوا إلىٰ قومهم مّنذرين *
قالوا يـٰقومنا إنّا سمعنا كتـٰبا أنزل من بعد موسىٰ مصدقا لّما بين يديه يهدى إلى الحقّ وإلى طريق مّستقيم * يـٰقومنا

1. It is now a *mîqât* for the pilgrims coming from the side of Najd.

2. *Bukhârî,* nos. 3231, 7389; *Muslim,* no. 1795; Al-Bayhaqî, *Dalâ'il,* II, 417; Abû Nu'aym, *Dalâ'il,* 281-282.

3. Ibn Hishâm, I, 422; Ibn Sa'd, I, 211-212.

أجيبوا داعى اللّه وءامنوا به يغفر لكم مّن ذنوبكم ويجركم مّن عذاب أليم ﴾ (٤٦: ٢٩-٣٢)

"Behold, We turned towards you a company of jinn listening to the Qur'ân. When they attended it they said: Listen in silence. When it was finished they returned to their folk, warning them (of their sins). They said (to them): O our people, we have indeed listened to a Book sent down after Mûsâ, confirming what came before it. It guides to the truth and to a straight path. O our people, respond to the one who calls to Allah and believe in Him. He will forgive your sins and save you from a painful punishment". (46:29-32).

﴿ قل أوحى إلىّ أنه استمع نفر مّن الجنّ فقالوا إنّا سمعنا قرءانا عجبا * يهدى إلى الرشد فـئامنّا به ولن نّشرك بربّنا أحدا ﴾ (٧٢: ١-٢)

"Say: It has been revealed to me that a company of jinn listened to the Qur'ân and they said: We have indeed heard a wonderful Qur'ân. It guides to the right course. So we have believed in it; and we shall never set anyone as partner with our Lord". (72:1-2).

The fact of jinn's acceptance of Islam and coming to the Prophet is attested to by authentic traditions also.[1]

The Prophet then arrived at Ḥirâ' where the question of how to enter Makka came up for consideration. The question was in fact raised by Zayd ibn Ḥârithah in view of the Prophet's having been previously ousted from that town. The Prophet calmly replied that Allah, as Protector of His religion, would surely provide a way out. He then sent a messenger ('Abd Allah ibn 'Urayqiṭ) to the Quraysh leader Al-'Akhnas ibn Sharîq to ask him if he would take the Prophet under his protection. Al-'Akhnas was originally a man of Banû Thaqîf; but he had settled at Makka as a confederate of Banû Zuhrah and had in the course of time become its most distinguished leader. He sent his reply saying that since he was only a confederate (*ḥalîf*), his protection would not be of any avail against any original Quraysh clan. Next the Prophet sent his messenger to Suhayl ibn 'Amr of Banû 'Âmir asking for his protection. The latter similarly pointed out that Banû 'Âmir clan was not entitled to offer protection against such clans as Banû Ka'b. Then the Prophet sent his emissary to Muṭ'im ibn 'Adiyy of Banû Nawfal. He agreed to offer protection to the Prophet. Accordingly Muṭ'im, accompanied by his sons with arms, went to the Ka'ba compound and asked the Prophet to enter

1. *Bukhârî,* No. 4921; *Muslim,* nos. 449,450; *Musnad,* I, 436; Al-Bayhaqî, *Dalâ'il,* 225-233; Abu Nu'ajm, *Dalâ'il,* 363-366; Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr,* VII, 272-287.

the town. He went to the Ka'ba and circumambulated it as Muṭ'im and his sons stood by.[1] One of the Quraysh leaders (either 'Abû Sufyân or 'Abû Jahl) asked Muṭ'im whether he was there to offer protection or had become a follower of the Prophet. Muṭ'im replied that he was there as protector. The Qurayshite leader remarked that Muṭ'im's protection could not be dishonoured. The Prophet did not forget this help of Muṭ'im's and also his role in ending the boycott against Banû Hashim. Muṭ'im died shortly afterwards. After the victory at Badr the Prophet remarked with reference to the Quraysh prisoners of war that were Muṭ'im alive and asked for the release of those men, he would have gladly done so.[2]

II. THE APPROACH TO THE TRIBES

Muṭ'im ibn 'Adiyy's standing surety for the Prophet afforded him a respite for resuming the work of seeking support from elsewhere. As already indicated, the process had started even before the end of the boycott. This was only natural; for, in view of the very advanced age of 'Abû Ṭâlib and the state of his health everyone could realize that he would not live much longer and, of all persons, the Prophet could visualize that the situation would be far worse for him and his cause at Makka after 'Abû Ṭâlib's death. Hence he started approaching the tribes and their leaders as they came to Makka on pilgrimage and other occasions seeking their support. Historians like Ibn Isḥâq, Al-Ṭabarî, Ibn Sa'd and others of course speak of the approach to the tribes after having narrated the death of 'Abû Ṭâlib and the visit to Ṭâ'if; but they do not really say that such approaches were made *after* those events. Indeed their description and the known chronology of the main events in the last three years of the Makkan period make it quite clear that the process of approaching the tribes had started almost simultaneously with the beginning of the boycott. The migration to Madina, as is well known, took place at the beginning of the 14th year of the mission; the Second 'Aqabah pledge took place at the end of the 13th year; the First Aqabah pledge at the end of the 12th year and the first batch of six Madinans embraced Islam at Aqabah at the end of the 11th year of the mission. Now, Ibn Isḥâq very distinctly states that the Prophet came upon the Madinans on the last mentioned occasion in the course of his presenting himself to the tribes which he used to do "every year" at the *ḥajj* season.[3] This means that

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 381; Ibn Sa'd, I, 212.
2. *Bukhârî,* nos. 3139, 4020.
3. Ibn Hishâm, I, 428; Al-Ṭabarî, *Târîkh.* II, 353 (I/1209)

he had already started approaching the tribes for support and protection at least a couple of years earlier, i.e., when the boycott and blockade of Banû Hâshim were still in force. It should be recalled that during the *ḥajj* season the boycott and blockade in effect ceased to exist and the Prophet, like everyone else, could freely move about in Makka, Minâ and other places, preaching to the people and approaching the tribes. In a way the boycott itself gave an impetus to approaching the outside tribes. For, as the Quraysh coalition attempted to draw the outside tribes like Kinânah to their side, it was only natural that Banû Hâshim and the Prophet would, on their part, do all that was possible to counteract that. In fact, as mentioned earlier, during one *ḥajj* season when the boycott was theoretically in force the Prophet proposed even to visit the tent of Banû Kinânah with whom the Quraysh had entered into a pact for enforcing the boycott against Banû Hâshim.[1] Similarly a report by 'Urwah ibn al-Zubayr also mentions that the Prophet had already started approaching the tribes seeking their support and protection when the charter of boycott was set aside.[2] And both Al-Bayhaqî and 'Abû Nu'aym very appropriately place the visit to Ṭâ'if within their sections on "Approach to the tribes".[3]

It should of course be remembered that since the beginning of "public preaching" the Prophet used to visit the pilgrims of different places and tribes coming to Makka and Minâ during the *ḥajj* seasons and to invite them towards Islam. This new phase of his approach to them was, however, different. This time, in addition to his calling them to Islam and towards Allah, he frankly and literally "offered himself" to them seeking their protection and help and asking them to take him to their territory.[4] For that purpose he used to meet specially the leaders of important and powerful tribes not only during the *ḥajj* seasons but also when they visited Makka and the fairs of 'Ukâẓ, Dhû al-Mijâz and Majanna. In thus approaching them he invariably called them towards Allah and asked them to embrace Islam; but he made it clear that he had no intention to impose Islam on anyone. He told them that if they helped him and gave him protection to enable him to propagate the

1. *Bukhârî,* no. 1590; *Musnad,* II, 237.

2. Abû Nu'aym, *Dalâ'il,* 295 (no. 221).

3. *Ibid.,* 281-300; Al-Bayhaqî, *Dalâ'il,* II, 413-415.

4. *Musnad,* III, 322; *Tirmidhî, K. Fadâ'il al-Qur'ân,* b. 23 (*Tuḥfat al-'Aḥwadhî,* no. 3093); Abû Dâ'ûd, *Sunan, K. al-Sunnah,* b. 21, h. 1; Ibn Mâjah, *Sunan,* no. 201 (Vol. I, p. 73).

truth with which he had been commissioned by Allah, they would get the reward of paradise from Him.[1] Sometimes he is reported to have indicated that if they hepled him establish the truth they would become the masters of all Arabia and the neighbouring lands would be submissive to them.[2]

It appears that the Prophet, in seeking help from the tribes, did not limit his choice to any particular region or area of the peninsula. Rather he sought support from any of the influential tribes in the north, south, east or west of Arabia. The most important of the tribes whom he approached at different times were: (1) Banû 'Âmir ibn Ṣa'ṣa'ah, (2) Banû Maḥârib ibn Khasafah, (3) Banû Fizârah, (4) Banû Ghassân, (5) Banû Murrah, (6) Banû Ḥanîfah, (7) Banû Sulaym, (8) Banû 'Abs, (9) Banû Naḍr, (10) Banû al-Bakkâ', (11) Banû Kindah, (12) Banû Kalb, (13) Banû al-Ḥârith ibn Ka'b, (14) Banû 'Udhrah, (15) Banû al-Ḥaḍârima, (16) Banû Bakr ibn Wâ'il, (17) Banû Shaybân ibn Tha'labah and (18) Banû Hamdân.[3] These tribes were scattered all over Arabia. For instance no.1, Banû 'Âmir, was settled in Najd but its influence extended up to Ṭâ'if; no.4 (Ghassân) lived in the north-west of Arabia where one of their princes was a vassal of the Byzantine empire. No.6 (Banû Ḥanîfah) lived in Al-Yamâmah in east Arabia and was militarily very strong. No.7 (Banû Sulaym) lived near Khaybar. No.11 (Banû Kindah) lived in south Arabia. Its influence extended from Ḥaḍramaut to Yaman. No.12 (Banû Kalb) lived in north Arabia and its sphere of influence extended from Dumat al-Jandal to Tabûk. No.16 (Banû Bakr ibn Wâ'il) was a very powerful tribe whose jurisdiction extended from mid-Arabia to the eastren coastal region up to the confines of the Persian empire. Sometimes it came into armed conflicts with the latter. The other tribes also were scattered in the north, south, east and west of Arabia.

The tribes thus approached could realize the implications of the Prophet's proposals; for the fact of his conflict with his own people at Makka and the main aspects of his teachings were by then fairly known to them. Most of the tribes could visualize that to take the Prophet under their care and protection would involve them in hostility not only with the Makkans, but with the other Arabian tribes and, probably, also with some of the neighbouring

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 422; Al-Ṭabarî, *Târikh,* II, 348 (I/1204).

2. Ibn Sa'd, I, 216.

3. *Ibid.*, 216-217; 'Abû Nu'aym, *Dalâ'il,* 293; Ibn Kathîr, *Al-Bidâyah wa al-Nihâyah,* III, 146.

powers. It is also related that sometimes when the Prophet went round the camps of the principal tribes at Minâ, 'Abû Lahab followed him from one camp to another, speaking against him and telling them not to pay any heed to his words.[1] Under the circumstances the attitude of the tribes was either one of outright rejection, or of hostile argumentation, or of hesitation and wavering, or of bargaining about the material benefits that would accrue to them if with their help the Prophet became successful in his mission. Often a tribe would dismiss him by remarking that a man's own people knew him best and that when he had caused trouble among them he was not likely to do any good to the others. Such attitudes are illustrated by the glimses we get of the details of some of his negotiations with the different tribes.

Thus the Prophet approached Banû Kalb, specially their leading branch, Banû 'Abd Allah. He invited them towards Allah, asked them to embrace Islam and offered himself to them seeking their support and protection. They did not accept him.[2] Similarly he once came upon Banû Ḥanîfah in their camp at Minâ, urged Islam on them and sought their help and protection. They most rudely rejected him and abused him.[3] It was from that tribe that subsequently Musaylamah al-Kadhdhâb rose and opposed Islam most vehemently during the *khilâfah* of 'Abû Bakr (r.a.). Again, the Prophet came upon Banû 'Âmir ibn Ṣa'ṣa'ah in their camp, urged Islam on them and offered himself to them for their support and protection. One leading member of the tribe, Bayhara, said to himself that if he took the Quraysh youth (the Prophet) with him and espoused his cause, he (Bayharah) would be able to bring all Arabia under his control. So saying to himself he asked the Prophet whether, if with their help he succeeded in his mission, Banû 'Âmir would be the ones to succeed him in the ruling power. The Prophet replied that the matter of bestowing ruling power on anyone rested entirely with Allah. He bestows it on whomsoever He likes. Naturally this reply did not please Bayharah who said that it was simply unacceptable that the people of Banû 'Âmir would render themselves a target of enmity of all the other Arab tribes for the Prophet's sake and that when he succeeded the ruling power would be for others than Banû 'Âmir. Hence, he added, he had no need for

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 423.

2. Ibn Hishâm, I, 424-425. A slightly different version of the report is given in Abû Nu'aym, *Dalâ'il,* 288-290.

3. Ibn Hishâm I, 925.

the Prophet.[1] The sequel to the story is no less interesting. It is said that when those people of Banû 'Âmir returned home one of their elders who could not come to *ḥajj* due to old age and debility, was very sad when he heard of the incident, rebuking his people for their folly and remarking that they had missed an unprecedented opportunity the like of which would never again come their way and that no descendant of Ismâ'îl (p.b.h.) would ever make a false claim to Prophethood.[2]

Almost similar in purport was the reply of Banû Kindah whom the Prophet approached. They said that they would help and protect him if he agreed that after him they would succeed as the rulers of the land. The Prophet declined to make such a commitment.[3] It may be emphasized here that in both the instances of his negotiations with Banû 'Âmir ibn Ṣa'ṣa'ah and Banû Kindah the Prophet's reply was very correct and appropriate. He was seeking support for a cause and not for capturing the political power of the land. He could not therefore agree to a condition which was neither his aim nor in his power to fulfil. Such a prior agreement would have given a political colour to his mission and would have thus defeated its purpose.

Similarly the Prophet approached Banû Ḥamdân. It is reported that on one ocacsion he was going round the tents of the various tribes saying: "Are there any people who would take me along with them to their territory?" At this a man of Banû Hamdân came forward and agreed to take the Prophet with him. But soon afterwards the man thought that his tribe would not probably approve of his act. Hence he quickly came back to the Prophet and said that he would rather consult his tribe first about the matter and would come back in the following year.[4]

Another report gives some details of the Prophet's approach to Banû 'Abs. He, accompanied by Zayd ibn Ḥârithah, came upon the tent of the tribe at *Jamrat al-'Ûlâ* and invited them to accept Islam and to help him and take him with them. The report adds that in the previous years too the Prophet had similarly approached the tribe but none did respond to his requests. This time there was Maysarah ibn Masrûq al-'Absî with the group. He said to his people: "By Allah, it will be wise to accept his message and to

1. *Ibid.*, 424-425.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Abu Nu'aym, *Dalâ'il,* 291.
4. *Ibid*, 291-292; *Musnad,* III, 390; Ibn Kathîr, *Al-Bidâyah wa al-Nihâyah*, III, 146.

take him in our midst; for, by Allah, his affair shall prevail and it shall reach every quarter". But Maysarah's people disagreed with him saying that they had not the capacity to bear the burden which that action involved. The Prophet, however, became somewhat hopeful about Maysarah and talked to him. After listening to the Prophet Maysarah remarked: "How good and enlightening are your words! But my people are against me; and when they are opposing it, the others (of the tribe) will be still more against it". The Prophet then left the place. Years later when the Prophet performed the Farewell pilgrimage Maysarah presented himself to him and embraced Islam saying that he had been inclined towards Islam since he had met him (the Prophet) for the first time at Minâ.[1]

More graphic is the account given in a report by 'Alî ibn 'Abî Ṭâlib (r.a.) of another occasion. He says that the Prophet, accompanied by him and 'Abû Bakr (r.a.) once came upon a group of Arabs of Banû Rabî'ah at Minâ. 'Abû Bakr talked to them for sometime with not much success. Then the Prophet proceeded to another group of people of Banû Shaybân ibn Tha'labah. Among them were Mafrûq ibn 'Amr, Hânî ibn Qubayṣah, Al-Muthannâ ibn al-Ḥârithah and Nu'mân ibn Sharîk. Mafrûq was the closest to 'Abû Bakr; so he started talking to him (Mafrûq), enquiring about their military strength and defence capabilities. Mafrûq's reply indicated that they were quite strong in both respects. Then 'Abû Bakr introduced the Prophet to him. The Prophet then talked to him. Mafrûq asked the Prophet about his mission and teachings. He explained Islam to him and called on him to testify that there is none worthy of worship (*'ilâh*) except Allah and that he (the Prophet) was His Messenger. He also told them that he was seeking their protection and support so that he could carry out what Allah had commanded him to do; for the Quraysh had rejected him, defied Allah's words and had been content with falsehood instead of the truth. Mafrûq sought further information. Thereupon the Prophet recited unto him *'âyahs* 151-153 of *sûrat al-'An'âm* (*sûrah* 6). Mafrûq desired to listen to more of the Qur'ân adding that this could not have been man's words or else they would have recognized it. So the Prophet recited unto him *'âyah* 90 of *sûrat al-Naḥl* (16). Mafrûq was impressed and he introduced the Prophet to their chief and religious leader, Hânî' ibn Qubayṣah. The latter said that he had already

1. Abû Nu'aym, *Dalâ'il*, 293-294 (no. 220). See also *Al-'Iṣâbah*, no. 8381 (Vol.III, 469-470) and Ibn Kathîr, *Al-Bidâyah wa al-Nihâyah*, III, 145-146.

heard what the Prophet had uttered and believed it to be true; but that he had not yet thought over the consequences of what was being presented to them and it would not be wise to abandon their ancestral religion just on one sitting with the Prophet. Moreover, the rest of his people were not there and it would not be proper to impose some decision on them before consulting them. And as if to get support for what he had said Hânî introduced Al-Muthannâ ibn al-Ḥârithah, the leader of their military affairs, to the Prophet. Al-Muthannâ said that he also had heard the Prophet's conversation and that his reply was the same as that of Hânî. Al-Muthannâ further said that their influence extended over the north-eastern coastal region up to the borders of the Persian empire and that they had lately entered into a treaty with Persia undertaking not to introduce any changes in the existing state of affairs nor to give quarters to anyone who advocated such changes, adding that as for the Arabs they could well help and defend the Prophet against them, but as against Persia it was not within their power to do so. The Prophet thanked Al-Muthannâ for his frank reply but said that when one takes up the cause of Allah one does not make any exception. Then he left them.[1]

The report is significant in a number of ways. It very clearly shows that Banû Shaybân ibn Tha'labah, like many others of the tribes thus approached by the Prophet, were aware of the full implications of their taking the Prophet under their care and protection. Secondly, the disclosure by Al-Muthannâ that they had lately concluded a pact with Persia undertaking not to do anything which would tend to change the *staus quo*, particularly not to give quarters to anyone who advocated any change in the situation, shows that the neighbouring powers like Persia were very closely following the developments in Arabia following the Prophet's propagation of the truth. Indeed the last mentioned provision of the treaty between Banû Shaybân and Persia seems particularly aimed at him. And precisely for that reason the Prophet's insistence on unconditional support for the cause was very appropriate.

The report ends with the statement that after having left the camp of Banû Shaybân the Prophet came upon the people of 'Aws and Khazraj who made the oath of allegiance to him.[2] This means that the meeting with Banû Shaybân took place either in the 11th or the 12th year of the mission and that

1. Abu Nu'aym, *Dalâ'il,* 282-288.
2. *Ibid,* 288.

they were one of the last tribes to be thus approached by the Prophet. In any case, it was destined for the people of Madina to have the fortune and privilege of becoming the Helpers (*anṣâr*) of the Prophet.

II. THE SITUATION AT MADINA

The town of Madina, formerly called Yathrib, is situated some three hundred miles north of Makka. At the time it was inhabited by three main Jewish tribes, Banû al-Naḍîr, Banû Qainuqâ' and Banû Qurayẓah, and two Arab tribes, 'Aws and Khazraj. The Jews had left their own land as a result of successive foreign invasions and had settled in Madina a few centuries before the advent of Islam. Similarly the tribes of 'Aws and Khazraj are said to have originally come from Yaman and settled at Madina. The Jews were educationally more advanced and became in the course of time financially better off. As such they came to exercise considerable influence over the two Arab tribes, most of whom were pagans worshipping a number of idols. The Jews' influence over them was facilitated by the perennial rivalry and jealousy between the two Arab tribes themselves. Despite their common ancestry and the existence of close blood and marital relationships between them, and despite also the fact that the Jews were their common enemy, the two Arab tribes were engaged in constant hostilities and conflicts with each other. Within the span of one and a half century berfore the rise of Islam there were at least ten devastating wars between them, besides minor armed clashes. The Jews naturally took advantage of the situation and often played the one tribe against the other; for in the division and weakness of the two Arab tribes the Jews saw their own security and the continuance of their influence. At times they used even to threaten the two tribes by saying that the time for the advent of a Prophet had drawn near and when he appeared they, with his help, would inflict such a devastation upon 'Aws and Khazraj as had befallen the 'Âd and Thamud of old. In spite of this situation the two tribes could not make up their mutual jealousies and hostilities. Indeed, when the Prophet and the Muslims were facing the boycott and blockade of the Makkan unbelievers, the two tribes were preparing themselves for another suicidal conflict, namely the battle of Bu'âth, which took place some five years before the Prophet's migration to Madina. It was against the background of this impending conflict that the earliest contact with some of the leaders of that place seems to have taken place.

IV. THE EARLIEST CONTACTS WITH MADINA

According to Ibn Isḥâq,[1] Swayd ibn Ṣâmit of Banû 'Âmir ibn 'Awf of the 'Aws tribe came to Makka on *'umrah* or *ḥajj*. He was known among his people as *Kâmil* (Perfect) on account of his noble pedigree and all-round personal accomplishments. He was also distantly related to the Prophet in that Swayd's mother Laylâ bint 'Amr was a sister of Salmâh bint 'Amr, mother of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the Prophet's grandfather. On coming to know of Swayd's arrival at Makka the Prophet met him and invited him to accept Islam. He said to the Prophet: "Perhaps you have something like what I have". The Prophet demanded to know what he had. He said that he had the wisdom (or journal) of Luqmân with him. The Prophet asked him to recite it. He did so. Thereupon the Prophet said: "What you have related is all good; but what I have with me is far better. It is the Qur'ân. It has been sent down on me by Allah. It is guidance and enlightenment". Having said so he recited some part of the Qur'ân unto Swayd and once again asked him to embrace Islam. He did not decline and was apparently impressed, saying that what he had heard was indeed good. He then returned to Madina and was shortly afterwards killed by a Khazrajite before the battle of Bu'âth.[2]

The next instance of the Prophet's contact with a Madinan leader was clearly related to the background of the battle of Bu'âth. It is related that 'Abû al-Hythar 'Anas ibn Râfi' of Banû 'Abd al-Ashhal of the 'Aws tribe, accompanied by a few men of his clan including 'Iyâs ibn Mu'âdh came to Makka for the purpose of making a military alliance with the Quraysh against the tribe of Khazraj. On coming to know of their arrival the Prophet met them, talked to them and asked them whether they would like to have something better than what they had come for. They grew inquisitive and asked what it was. The Prophet then told them that he had been sent by Allah as His Messenger. Therefore he invited them to worship Allah Alone and not to set any partner with Him. He further told them that Allah had sent down a book to him, the Qur'ân, and then recited unto them some parts of it. He also explained Islam to them. On listening to him 'Iyâs ibn Mu'âdh, who was a young man, was so impressed that he addressed his companions saying: O my people, by Allah, this is better than what we have come for. But

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 425-427.

2. *Ibid*, 427. Supporting Ibn Isḥâq Ibn 'Abd al-Barr also says that Swayd was killed before the battle of Bu'âth (*Al-Istî'âb*, II, 677). Ibn al-Athîr, however, states that Swayd was killed in the battle of Bu'âth (*'Usd al-Ghâbah*, II, 337, No. 2347).

the group-leader 'Abû al-Hythar's enmity and jealousy against the Khazraj had so blinded him that he grasped a handful of dust in an extreme mood of irritation, threw it at 'Iyâs's face and remarked that that was not for what they had taken the trouble to come to Makka. 'Iyâs was silenced at this and the Prophet left them.[1] Abû al-Hythar's mission to the Quraysh was not, however, successful. Shortly after this the battle of Bu'âth took place. According to most of the sources this had happened four or five years before the Prophet's migration to Madina. This means that the instances of contact with the people of Madina noted above all took place before the end of the boycott and blockade in the early part of the 10th year of the mission. 'Iyâs ibn Mu'âdh did not however live long and died shortly after the battle of Bu'âth and before the Prophet's migration to Madina. It is reported that those who were present at the time of 'Iyâs's death found him praising Allah and declaring His Oneness (*tawḥîd*) on his death-bed. They had no doubt that he died a Muslim and had contacted Islam at the meeting with the Prophet at Makka.[2]

According to another report the first to embrace Islam from among the people of Madina were As'ad ibn Zurârah and Dhakwân ibn 'Abd Qays. They are reported to have come to Makka to settle some matter with 'Utbah ibn Rabî'ah. When they met him he told them, pointing to the Prophet: "This performer of prayer has engrossed our attention from everything. He presumes he is Allah's Messenger". On hearing this remark Dhakwân whispered to his companion, As'ad: "Look, this is your religion". For As'ad ibn Zurârah and another person of Madina, 'Abû al-Haytham ibn al-Tayyahân, used to talk about monotheism. Dhakwân and As'ad then met the Prophet who explained Islam to them. They embraced it and returned to Madina. As'ad subsequently met 'Abû al-Haytham ibn al-Tayyahân and informed him all about the Prophet and Islam. So he also embraced Islam.[3] Yet another report says that Râfi' ibn Mâlik al-Zuraqî and Mu'âdh ibn 'Afrâ' came to Makka to perform *'umrah* when they heard about the Prophet and his affairs. So they went to him, heard an exposition of Islam and embraced it.[4]

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 427-428.
2. Ibn Hishâm, 428.
3. Ibn Sa'd, I, 218.
4. *Ibid.*

Whatever the truth about the two last mentioned reports regarding the early conversion to Islam of Dhakwân and As'ad ibn Zurârâh on the one hand, and of Râfi' ibn Mâlik and Mu'âdh ibn 'Afrâ' on the other, they are indicative of the fact that news about the Prophet and Islam was penetrating into Madina, as it indeed was doing into the other parts of Arabia. There is no doubt, however, that As'ad ibn Zurârah was one of the six persons whom the Prophet met at 'Aqabah at the end of the 11th year of his mission and who embraced Islam on that occasion. Similarly As'ad and Dhakwân were among the 12 persons who made the First Pledge at 'Aqabah at the end of the 12th year. Also there is no doubt that the Prophet's meeting with Swayd ibn Ṣâmit and 'Iyâs ibn Mu'âdh had taken place before the battle of Bu'âth. These early contacts, indeed 'Iyâs's desire for the "better" thing for his people ultimately bore fruit; for, by the time he died, or very shortly after it, the first batch of six of his fellow citizens of Madina committed themselves to the cause of Islam at 'Aqabah at the end of the 11th year of the mission.

CHAPTER XXXVI
Al-'ISRÂ' AND *AL-MI'RÂJ*

Before proceeding further with the narrative of the Prophet's efforts to obtain support and help from beyond Makka it would be worthwhile to refer to the greatest of all miracles that occurred to any of the Prophets and Messengers of Allah, namely, *al-'Isrâ'* and *al-Mi'râj*. The following is only a brief account of this memorable event as gleaned from the Qur'ân and the authentic traditions.

I. *'AL-ISRÂ'* AND *AL-MI'RÂJ*

The literal meanings of *al-Isrâ'* and *al-Mi'râj* are, respectively, the "Nocturnal Journey" and "The Ascension". They refer to the most miraculous events in the Prophet's life, that of Allah's making him on one night travel along with the angel Jibrîl at a lightning speed from the Ka'ba to Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem) and thence to ascend to the higest limit of the seven skies and there to see a number of Allah's signs and to receive some very important instructions and revelations, and then to return to Makka during the same night. In the religious parlance of Islam the two terms *al-'Isrâ'* and *al-Mi'râj* are used interchangeably. Indeed as the entire journey happened within a night both the phases may be included in the first term, *al-'Isrâ'*; and Imâm Muslim very appropriately calls his section on the reports concerning these events *Bâb al-'Isrâ'*. In popular use, however, the term *al-Mi'râj* is used more commonly to refer to both.

These momentous events are very distinctly mentioned in the Qur'ân. Thus the very first *'âyah* of *sûrah* 17, which is also named *Sûrat al-'Isra'* (or *Banû Isrâ'îl)* states:

﴿ سبحـٰن الذى أسرىٰ بعبده ليلا مّن المسجد الحرام إلى المسجد الأقصا الذى بـٰـركنا حوله لنريه, من ءايـٰـتنا إنه, هو السميع البصير ﴾ (١٧: ١)

"Glory to Him Who made His servant travel one night from the Sacred Mosque (Ka'ba) to the Farthest Mosque (*Bayt al-Maqdis*), whose environs We have blessed, in order that We might show him of Our Signs. Verily He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing". (17:1)

While this *'âyah* refers specifically to the *'isrâ'* from the Ka'ba to Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem), *'âyahs* 13-18 of *sûrat al-Najm* (53) refer to the ascension thus:

﴿ ولقد رءاه نزلة أخرىٰ * عند سدرة المنتهىٰ * عندها جنة المأوىٰ * إذ يغشىٰ السدرة ما يغشىٰ * ما زاغ البصر وما طغىٰ * لقد رأىٰ من ءايـٰـت ربه الكبرىٰ ﴾ (٥٣: ١٣-١٨)

"And indeed he (the Prophet) saw him (Jibrîl in his real form) at a second descent, near *Sidrah* (Lote Tree) the terminus. By it is *Jannat al-Ma'wâ* (Garden of Abode), when the *Sidrah* was covered by what covered it. The eye did not deviate, nor did it transgress. He indeed saw (some) of the greatest signs of his Lord ". (53:13-18)

This passage speaks clearly of the Prophet's viewing some of the "Greatest Signs of His Lord" near the *Sidrah* or "Lote Tree" which is the terminus beyond which no created being can proceed. The two passages thus speak respectively of the first and the last part of the journey as a whole, that is *al-'Isrâ'* and *al-Mi'râj* together, or the most important parts of it.

Another Qur'ânic passage which refers to the last part of the journey and its sequel is 17:60. Its relevant part runs as follows:

﴿ وإذ قلنا لك إنّ ربّك أحاط بالنّاس وما جعلنا الرُّءْيا التى أرينـك إلا فتنة لّلنّاس... ﴾ (١٧: ٦٠)

"And (recall) when We said to you: 'Verily your Lord encompasses mankind. And We did not set the signs We showed you except as a test for the people..." (17:60).

This *'âyah* clearly refers to the sequel of the incident which, when the Prophet gave it out, was disbelieved by many. It is said in consolation of the Prophet and as a rebuttal to the skeptics that Allah is very much aware and observant of those men and that it was His plan that the "signs" shown to the Prophet should be a "trial" and "test" (of faith) for men".[1] The same allusion is contained in 17:1 which ends with the statement: "Verily He (Allah) is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing"; i.e., of how the disbelievers treat the account of the *'Isrâ'* and the *Mi'râj*.

Obviously these Qur'ânic references to the incident, though very precise and positive, are nonetheless very brief. The details are, however, available in the rather numerous reports that exist on the subject. They emanate from the Companions who themselves heard about it from the Prophet;[2] and the number of Companions who thus speak on the subject, mostly independently of one another, are no less than twenty, including 'Umm Hânî', 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbâs,[3] 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ûd,[4] 'Anas ibn Mâlik,[5] 'Abû Hurayrah,[6]

1. See below (text) for further discussion on the *'âyah.*

2. Almost all the important reports are collected in Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr,* XV, 2-16; Al-Qurṭubî, *Tafsîr,* X, 205-208 and Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr,* V, 4-39.

3. ***Bukhârî,*** nos. 3239, 3396, 3888, 6613; ***Muslim,*** nos. 165, 176; ***Musnad,*** I, 257,374.

4. ***Musnad,*** I, 375, 387, 422.

5. ***Bukhârî,*** nos. 3370, 4964, 5610, 5717, 6581; ***Muslim,*** nos. 165; ***Musnad,*** III, 120, 128, 148-149, 224, 231-232, 230-240.

6. ***Bukhârî,*** no. 5576; ***Musnad,*** II, 353, 363.

'Abû Dharr,[1] Jâbir ibn 'Abd Allah,[2] Mâlik ibn Ṣa'ṣa'ah,[3] Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yâman,[4] 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b,[5] and 'Abû 'Ayyûb al-'Anṣârî.[6]

The reports of course differ in matters of detail; but in general they agree on all the essential points. The gist of the reports is that one night the angel Jibrîl came to the Prophet and took him from the Ka'ba to Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem), making him ride on a miraculous animal called *Burâq* which travelled at lightning speed. Already a number of the previous Prophets including Ibrâhîm, Mûsâ and 'Îsâ had been made to be present at Bayt al-Maqdis to welcome and greet the Prophet on his arrival there; and they did so. He then prayed with them there, leading them in the prayer. Thereafter Jibrîl ascended into the seven skies, taking the Prophet with him. At the first sky he was greeted and his prophethood affirmed by Adam, who was made to be present there. Similarly the Prophet was welcomed and greeted on the second sky by Prophets Yaḥyâ and 'Îsâ, on the third sky by Prophet Yûsuf, on the fourth sky by Prophet Idrîs, on the fifth sky by Prophet Hârûn, on the sixth sky by Prophet Mûsâ and on the seventh sky by Prophet Ibrâhîm (p.b. on them). After that the Prophet was taken still higher up to *Sidrat al-Muntahâ* which was covered by dazzling light. He was then shown some of the greatest and most wonderful "signs" of Allah, including the original form of Jibrîl and *al-Bayt al-Ma'mûr* in which each day a new group of seventy thousand angels entered for prayer. There he received three specific things from Allah — (a) the command to pray five times a day, (b) the revelation of the last couple of *'âyahs* of *surat al-Baqarah* and (c) an assurance that everyone of his followers (*'ummah*) would be rewarded with paradise if he did not commit the sin of *shirk* (associating partners with Allah) and was not guilty of grave sins (*kabâ'ir*). The Prophet was also shown paradise and hell and the samples of punishments that would be awarded to grave sinners like fornicators and the devourers of usury and of the properties of orphans. He was then brought back by Jibrîl in the same way, visiting Bayt al-Maqdis again on the return journey and from there to Makka, passing on the way by

1. *Bukhârî, n*os. 349, 1636, 3342.
2. *Bukhârî, n*os. 3886, 4710.
3. *Bukhârî, n*os. 3207, 3393, 3430, 3887; *Musnad,* IV, 207-210; *Nasa'î* Nos., 448-451.
4. *Musnad,* V, 387, 392, 394; *Ṭayâlisî,* no. 411.
5. *Musnad,* V, 143-144.
6. *Musnad,* V, 418.

a trade caravan who had lost an animal of theirs and of which the Prophet informed them. All these were completed during the night and the Prophet was back to his place at Makka before dawn.

It is reported that 'Umm Hânî', the Prophet's aunt, when she heard the account of the event from him, asked him not to relate his experiences to men for they sure would disbelieve and ridicule him.[1] The Prophet himself was well aware that such would inevitably be the case.[2] Yet he was determined to give out the truth. Accordingly in the morning he went to the Ka'ba compound and related his experiences. The campaign of disbelief and ridiculing was as usual led by 'Abû Jahl who gathered the Quraysh people round the Prophet and asked him to repeat the story to them. He did so. Instantly the crowd burst into disbelief and riduculing. Some were dumbfounded in astonishment. Even some Muslims are reported to have disbelieved the story and relapsed into their former state. 'Abû Jahl and his people thought that the story was so absurd that it would shake the faith even of 'Abû Bakr. So some of them went to him, told him the story and asked him whether he believed that strange tale. They were however sadly disappointed in their expectations. 'Abû Bakr very firmly told them that if the Prophet had related it, it must have been true, adding that he believed in far stranger things from him than this, that of his daily receiving news from the heaven and delivering it to the people. He then went to the Prophet, enquired of him whether he had said what was reported of him, and on his replying in the affirmative 'Abû Bakr instantly declared his belief in it. It was in consequence of this incident that the Prophet called him *Al-Ṣiddîq*, which has ever since been his distinctive title. The unbelievers did not leave the matter there, however. They demanded of the Prophet to give a detailed description of Bayt al-Maqdis if he had really been there. The Prophet started telling them the details, and as he did so Allah made Bayt al-Maqdis appear before his eyes so that he described it to the exact details.[3] The challengers were silenced, though they still obstinately refrained from believing.

There is a difference of opinions among the authorities regarding the date of this memorable event. While some suggest that it took place rather very early in the Prophet's mission, most of the authorities suggest dates ranging

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 402.
2. *Musnad,* I, 309 (report of 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbâs).
3. *Bukhâri,* no. 3886.

between two years and six months before the migration to Madina.[1] The context of *sûrat al-'Isrâ'* and the internal evidence of the reports on the subject unmistakably indicate that it took place rather late in the Makkan period of the mission. One very strong point is that the command to pray five times a day was definitely received during the *Mi'râj*; and since such five-time prayers were not performed during the life-time of Khadîjah (r.a.) who died late in the tenth year of the mission, the comamnd to do so, and therefore the *Mi'râj*, must have taken place after her death. On such considerations it is generally held that the *'Isrâ'* and *Mi'râj* took place either shortly before or shortly after the First 'Aqaba Pledge (12th year of the mission). As regards the exact date, the most widely accepted view is that it took place on the night of 27 Rajab.

II. SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPORTANCE

Indeed the *'Isra'* and *Mi'raj* were yet another special favour bestowed on the Prophet and another indication of his ultimate success given him by Allah following his visit to Ṭâ'if. The first of these encouraging indications was the deputing of the angel in charge of mountains to carry out the Prophet's wish with regard to his oppressors.[2] The second was the listening of a group of jinn to the Qur'ân and their acceptance of Islam.[3] The third and most important was the *'Isrâ'* and *Mi'râj*. And it is in the context of these encouraging signs and developments that the significance of the event becomes clear. The Prophet's mission and struggle was about to enter a very crucial and difficult phase requiring supreme sacrifices for the sake of Allah. Hence Allah specially prepared the Prophet for the task ahead by further steeling his convictions and showing him some of His Greatest Signs, thereby giving him further indications of the sure success that awaited him. Such special favours to Prophets at decisive junctures in their careers were only in consonance with the way of Allah — *sunnat Allah*. Thus was Prophet Ibrâhîm shown the "Kingdoms (secrets) of the heavens and the earth, in order to enable him to become one of those who have certitude" ﴿وكذٰلك نرىٓ إبرٰهيم ملكوت السمٰوٰت والأرض وليكون من الموقنين﴾.[4] Similarly Mûsâ

1. See for some discussions on the question of date Al-Qurṭubî, *Tafsîr,* X, 210; Al-Nawawî, *Sharḥ Muslim,* Pt. II, 209-210; Al-Shawkânî, *Tafsîr,* III, 207-208; *Zâd al-Ma'âd,* II, 49.

2. *Supra,* p. 810.

3. *Supra,* pp. 810-811.

4. Q. 6:75.

was shown some of Allah's greatest signs ﴿لنريك من ءايـتنا الكبرى﴾.[1] It must not be supposed that the Prophet's conviction and faith were any the weaker or incomplete before the *'Isrâ'* and *Mi'râj*. He had full and firm convictions and belief; but after these events his convictions were transformed, so to say, into practical knowledge and experience. Thus if he had hitherto believed and declared, on the basis of revelations received, that there are seven skies; he had now been enabled to see them with his own eyes. Hitherto he had spoken of the angels; he now saw them and some of their activities and assignments. He had been hitherto told of heavens and hell, of the resurrection of the dead, and of rewards and punishments. He was now enabled to view samples of all these facts. The certitude and practical knowledge which were thus implanted in him would make him face fearlessly and unhesitatingly the hazards of all the world and the enmity and ridicule of all the forces of opposition. It was this certitude and knowledge, coupled with conviction, which led him to disregard the affectionate advice of his aunt 'Umm Hânî' and his own awareness of the immediate consequences, and to declare fearlessly and unreservedly the experiences given him by Allah. Consider the situation. He was practically abandoned by his own clan. He had been rejected by the sister city of Ṭâ'if. He had been ousted from his own town and was continuing to stay there on the sufference of only one influential individual (Muṭ'im ibn 'Adîyy) who had given him personal protection. Under such a situation no person would ordinarily hazard giving out a personal experience of his which was sure to cause him further trouble and to give to the enemies a further point of disbelief and ridicule. Nor was the Prophet in any need at that juncture of time to making up and giving out such an apparently strange and absurd story, the more so because it was in no way calculated to gain an abatement of the opposition of his community, nor an accession of further converts to Islam. Yet the Prophet unhesitatingly gave out the account of his experience because what he had seen and learnt was no ordinary knowledge; it was no ordinary conviction. To suppress or deny the experience he had obtained was to deny and suppress his own existence and mission. It was this certitude and conviction which propelled him, in the face of sure capture and killing by the enemies, to say to 'Abû Bakr, "Be not afraid, Allah is with us". It was this faith and certitude that made him and his followers brave all the odds and face all the dangers in the cause

1. Q. 20:23.

of Allah.

This brings us to the second significance of *'Isrâ'* and *Mi'râj* which is also indicated in the Qur'ân, namely, to test the faith and attitude of men. So far as the Muslims were concerned, it was a test of their faith and of their obedience to the Messenger of Allah. 'Abû Bakr passed this test instantly and most creditably, while the other Muslims also passed it duly. The report of some believers having relapsed into disbelief on hearing the account is just in the fitness of things. The Prophet's mission and struggle was about to enter a decisive phase requiring supreme sacrifices on the part of his followers. It was therefore Allah's plan that the Prophet should now have round him only persons of unquestioned faith and unflinching devotion and obedience. And indeed the "Companions" who now stuck to him did pass the acid test of sacrificing their hearth and home, their kith and kin, their properties and earthly belongings and, above all, their own lives, for the sake of furthering the cause they had espoused. It was this quality of character and conviction, coupled with Allah's grace, that henceforth led them on to successes of which the starting point was the battle of Badr.

A third but no less profound significance of *'Isrâ'* and *Mi'râj* is that it symbolized, once and for all, the fact that the Prophet belonged to, and was the leader and final member of a community of Prophets whom Allah commissioned for the guidance of mankind; that the revelations which he received were in continuation and completion of the previous revelations and that Bayt al-Maqdis, like the Ka'ba, is a"blessed" spot (بـاركنا حوله) and another centre of attraction for the believers. The importance of the place thus emphasized was indeed given a practical shape by its fixation as *qiblah* (direction for prayer) for a fixed period.[1]

III. NATURE OF *AL-'ISRÂ' AND AL-MI'RÂJ*

The *'Isrâ'* and *Mi'râj* was a miracle which occurred exclusively to the

1. Exactly at what point of time Bayt al-Maqdis was taken for *qiblah* is not on record. The general belief that it was the "First of the two qiblas" - أولى القبلتين - is not correct. A report given by Ibn Isḥâq of course says that the Prophet used to pray between the two *rukns* (the Black Stone and the Yamanî corners), thus turning towards Syria (Bayt al-Maqdis) as well as facing the Ka'ba. The report is obviously an attempt to reconclie the known fact of Bayt al-Maqdis being for sometime the *qiblah* with the equally well-known fact that during his stay at Makka the Prophet did never turn his back towards the Ka'ba while praying or beseeching Allah's favour. But apart from this fact and the question of the authenticity of this report, it does not really say that the Prophet did so pray standing between the two corners always and =

Prophet and none else viewed it nor could have viewed and experienced it. It was because of this exclusively personal nature of the miracle that gave rise subsequently to various opinions regarding its nature. Mainly two views gained ground in the course of time. One view says that it took place in dream, while the Prophet was asleep; and the other view says that it took place spiritually, i.e., the Prophet's "spirit"or *rûḥ* was made to travel, his body did not travel. The evidence adduced in support of both the views will be noted presently. It must be emphasized at the outset, however, that both these views seem to emanate at bottom from a feeling that it is impossible or impracticable that the Prophet should have *physically* performed such a feat. If that is the feeling, then both the views border on disbelief. For the Prophet did not say that *he* did it. He said, and the Qur'ân says, that Allah did it, i.e., He took His servant one night etc. Hence the question of possibility or impossibility does not arise in the matter. Possibility and impossibility and, as Maudûdî points out, the restrictions of time and space apply to man, not to Allah.[1] To think that it is impossible for Allah to have caused something to happen is disbelief.

The "Dream Theory" seeks support in some statements in the reports relating to the subject , more specifically to a report attributed to Mu'âwiyah ibn 'Abî Sufyân (r.a.) and cited by Ibn Isḥâq.[2] It is said that when asked on the subject of *'Isrâ'* and *Mi'râj* Mu'âwiyah said that it was a "true dream" which Allah had shown the Prophet. (كانت رؤيا صادقة من اللّٰه). A further support is sought

= from the beginning to the end of his Makkan career. On the contrary, we have a number of authentic reports saying that the Prophet, before his migration to Madina, used to pray facing the Ka'ba, and that while praying in the *ḥijr* (*ḥatîm*), or at the *Maqâm* of Ibrahim, or near the *rukn* (Black Stone), or while praying at the down-town (*al-'abtah*) or at Minâ. (See for instance *Bukhârî,* no. 3856; *Muslim,* nos. 1794 and 2473; *Musnad,* IV, 55; VI, 349 and Al-Ṭabarî, *Târikh*, II, 311 (I/1161-1162). In fact Bayt al-Maqdis appears to have been taken for *qiblah* either on the eve of, or simultaneously with the migration to Madina. Prior to that if the Prophet had ever turned his face in prayer to the Bayt al-Maqdis alone keeping the Ka'ba behind him, it would have instantly created an uproar and would have been a very fruitful point of criticism and opposition of the Quraysh leaders. Also, the importance and sanctity of the Ka'ba, enshrined in ageless tradition and reiterated in *sûrat al-Fîl* (105) and the call made to the Qyraysh to worship "The Lord of This House" ﴿فليعبدوا ربَّ هذا البيت﴾ in *sûrat Quraysh* (106) preclude the possibility of relegating the Ka'ba in the backaround and taking Bayt al-Maqdis as the *qibla* at the early Makkan period of the mission. Bayt al-Maqdis was made the *qiblah* for a transitional and short period. The Ka'ba is the First and the Final *qiblah* of the Muslims.

1. Abul A'la Maudûdî, *Sîrat Sarwar-i-'Âlam,* II, Lahore, 1398/1978. p. 646.
2. Ibn Hishâm, I, 400.

in the Qur'ânic statement at 17:60 which uses the expression *ru'yâ* (رؤيا) in connection with the event. The protagonists of the dream theory take the expression *ru'yâ* here to mean dream. Similarly the "Spirit Theory" is traced to a reported statement by 'Â'ishah (r.a.), which is also cited by Ibn Isḥâq.[1] The latter says that someone of 'Abû Bakr's family told him that 'Âishah said that the Prophet's body was not taken out but only his *rûḥ* was taken out for *'Isrâ'* and *Mi'râj*. Ibn Isḥâq himself lent support to the dream and spirit theories by pointing out, not quite relevantly, that since a *waḥy* received by a Prophet in dream is as true as that received in a state of wakefulness, and since the Prophet said that though his eyes slept his heart (*qalb* قلب) did not, it is the same whether the *'Isrâ'* and *Mi'râj* took place in his dream or in his wakefulness. In whichever form it happened it is right and true.[2]

Thus does Ibn Isḥâq attempt to keep pace with the different views that obviously had been in circulation at his time. So far as the spirit theory is concerned, it appears to be also a by-product of ṣûfism/mysticism that penetrated the ranks of the Muslims by that time. Some people even attempted to be wiser than Ibn Isḥâq by suggesting a half-and-half solution, namely, by saying that the *'Isrâ'* from the Ka'ba to Bayt al-Maqdis took place in body (*bi-jasadihi* بجسده) but the *Mi'râj* from the latter place to the *sidrat al-muntahâ* took place in spirit (*bi-rûḥihi* بروحه).[3]

All these views are, however, wrong and untenable; for the simple reason that they run counter to the clear text and sense of the Qur'ân and the authentic traditions. The objections to the theories were very convincingly pointed out by Al-Ṭabarî who, as is his method, after having reproduced the reports in support of the different views on the subject, says that the dream and spirit theories are wrong on the following grounds. First, they run counter to the clear text of the Qur'ân. If it had happened in dream or in spirit Allah would not have said *'asrâ bi 'abdihi* (بعبده). Instead some such expression as *'asrâ bi rûḥihi* or *'asrâ fî manâmihi,* that is, made him travel in dream or in spirit would have been used. It is also unjustifiable to go beyond the direct wording of the text of the Qur'ân and to put an interpretation on it which violates its direct meaning. Second, if the *'Isrâ* and *Mi'râj* was a matter of dream or spirit, it would have been no evidence of prophethood,

1. *Ibid.,* 399.
2. *Ibid.,* 400. Ibn Isḥâq's expression is: (على أي حاليه كان: نائما أو يقظان كل ذلك حق، وصدق)
3. Mentioned in Al-Shawkânî, *Tafsîr,* III, 207.

nor any ground for the unbelievers and others to disbelieve and ridicule the Prophet, as by all accounts they did, for any person may see any type of strange dreams in sleep. Third, the mention of Burâq and other things in the reports clearly suggest physical transportation, not the transportation of *rûḥ*.[1] Fourth, the meaning of *ru'yâ* in 17:60 is 'seeing with one's own eyes', as Ibn 'Abbâs points out,[2] and also because the last clause of the *'âyah* states that this *ru'yâ* was made a test (*fitnah*) for men. Unless, therefore, the meaning here is physical viewing, it could not have been a test for the faith of anyone. Al-Ṭabarî therefore emphasizes that the *'âyah* 17:60 should be interpreted in conjunction with the first *'âyah* of the *sûrah* which speaks of the *'Isrâ'* and at both the places the experience spoken of is physical.[3] It may be added here that the *isnâd* of the report attributed to 'Â'ishah (r.a.) is unknown (*majhûl*) and on the basis of such defective *isnâd* the saying cannot be definitely ascribed to her. In any case, this report and also the reported statement of Mu'âwiyah (r.a.) are both opposed to the clear purport of the text of the Qur'ân and cannot be allowed to override it. The truth is that the *'Isrâ'* and *Mi'râj* took place physically and in the Prophet's wakefulness. It was not a matter of dream or spiritual experience. The grounds thus mentioned by Al-Ṭabarî are decisive and these have been reiterated, in one form or other, by subsequent scholars and commentators.[4]

IV. DID THE PROPHET SEE ALLAH?

Last but not least, reference should be made to the question whether the Prophet saw Allah during the *Mi'râj*. On this question too, like every other question relating to the Prophet's life and Islam, the decisive evidence is that of the Qur'ân. The first *'âyah* of *sûrat al-'Isrâ'* (17) says clearly that Allah made His servant travel by night in order to show him some of His Great signs ﴿لنريه من ءايـٰتنا الكبرى﴾. Similarly *'âyah* 18 of *sûrat al-Najm* (53), which is the other Qur'ânic reference to the occasion, states equally distinctly: "He indeed saw some of the greatest signs of his Lord ﴿لقد رأى من ءايـٰت ربه الكبرى﴾. Previously to this *'âyah* the *sûrah* mentions the Prophet's seeing the angel Jibrîl once in the high horizon and at a second descent near the *sidrat al-*

1. Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr*, XV, 16-17.
2. *Ibid.*, 110;
3. Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr*, XV, 113.
4. See for instance Al-Qurṭubî, *Tafsîr*, X, 208-209; Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr*, V, 40-41; Al-Shawkânî, *Tafsîr*, III, 207.

muntahâ, which was at the time covered by "what covered it".[1] Thus both the relevant Qur'ânic passages uniformly state that the Prophet was shown some great signs of his Lord, which included the sighting of Jibrîl in his real form. Indeed if he had seen Allah, such a special fact would have been very distinctly stated in the Qur'ân, as is the fact of Allah's speaking to Moses mentioned very distinctly. Thus according to the Qur'ân the Prophet saw only some of the greatest signs of Allah, not Him as such.

The question has come up, however, on account of a number of varying reports that have come down to us. These reports fall into two distinct categories. One group of reports fall in line with the Qur'ânic information and are in fact an elucidation of it. They very distinctly state that the Prophet saw some of Allah's signs including Jibrîl in his original form. More importantly, the reporters, or most of them, mention that they asked the Prophet on the subject and they reproduce verbatim what he said in reply. Their *isnâd* is also unimpeachable. Conversely, the other group of reports seek to explain the above mentioned Qur'ânic references, more particularly the statements in *sûrat al-Najm*, in the sense that the Prophet saw his Lord. Though the *isnâd* of these reports is not questionable, they are at a number of disadvantages in comparison with the first group of reports. In the first place, they are at variance with the direct information of the Qur'ân and go beyond it. Secondly, they are at cross purposes with the first group of reports that are in no way less weighty. Thirdly, the reporters in the second category of reports do not say that they asked the Prophet on the matter, nor do they reproduce his exact words in reply. In fact this omission of reference to the Prophet makes the information given as merely the views of the reporters themselves. Fourthly, the reports in this latter group are themselves at variance with one another.

The most important of the reports in the first category is that of 'Â'ishah (r.a.) which has come down to us through a number of channels. The fullest version has it that Masrûq asked her whether the Prophet had seen Allah. She said that the question made her hair stand up. She then stated that whoever presumes that Muḥammad (ﷺ) saw his Lord is guilty of fabricating a grave lie against Allah. At this Musrûq sought an explanation from her of the Qur'ânic statememts 81:23, "He indeed had seen him in the clear

1. See *supra* pp. 439-445 for a detailed discussion on this passage.

horizon" ﴿ولقد رءاه بالأفق المبين﴾ and 53:13, "He had indeed seen him at a second descent" ﴿ولقد رءاه نزلة أخرى﴾. She said: "I was the first person of this nation to ask the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, about it. He said: 'He indeed is Jibrîl. I did not see him in the form he is created except on these two occasions. I saw him descending from the sky and his great form covering what is between the sky and the earth.'" Then she reminded Masrûq of the two *'âyahs,* 6:103 , "Eyes do not reach him, but He encompasses all eyes, etc" ﴿لا تدركه الأبصـر وهو يدرك الأبصـر....﴾ and 42:51, "It is not for man that Allah speak to him except by means of *waḥy* or from behind a veil, ..." ﴿وما كان لبشر أن يكلّمه اللّه إلا وحيا أو من ورآي حجاب...﴾[1]

Equally emphatic is the report of 'Abû Dharr (r.a.) who says: 'I asked the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be on him,"Did you see your Lord?' He said: 'Light! How could I see Him?'"[2] Another version coming through a different channel says that 'Abd Allah ibn Shafîq said to 'Abû Dharr: "If I had seen the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be on him, I would have asked him." 'Abû Dharr said: "On what would you have asked him?" Abd Allah ibn Shafîq said: "I would have asked him: 'Did you see your Lord?'" At this 'Abû Dharr said: "I indeed did ask him about it. He said, 'I saw light.'"[3] Similarly 'Abû Mûsâ al-'Ash'arî (r.a.) says that the Prophet said to them : "His (Allah's) veil is light. If he removed it, the glare of His Countenance would have burnt whatever of His creation that crosses His sight."[4] Again 'Abû Hurayrah (r.a.), in explaining 53:13 states that the Prophet saw Jibrîl.[5] To the same effect is the report of 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ûd given in explanation of 53:9-10 and 53:17-18.[6]

Of the other category of reports the most important are those attributed to 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbas (r.a.). One of these reports makes him say that the Prophet saw "him" with his heart.[7] In another version he says that the

1. *Muslim, no.* 177; *Bukhârî,* Nos. 3234, 3235, 4855, 7380; 7351; *Musnad,* VI, 49-50, 230 241; Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr,* XXVII, 50-51.

2. *Muslim,* No. 178 (i) The expression is: (قال: نور أنّى أراه) See also *Musnad,* V, 147.

3. *Muslim,* No. 178 (ii). The expression is: (قال: رأيت نوراً) See also *Tirmidhî,* no. 3282.

4. *Muslim,* No. 179. The expression is:

(حجابه النور لو كشفه لأحرقت سبحات وجهه ما انتهى إليه بصره من خلقه)

5. *Ibid.,* no. 175

6. *Ibid.,* no. 174.; *Bukhârî, nos.,* 3232, 3233, 4856-4858; *Tirmidhî,* no. 3277, 3283; *Musnad,* I, 395, 397, 407.

7. *Muslim, no.* 176 (i). The expression is: (قال رآه بقلبه)

Prophet "saw him twice with his heart".[1] It is noteworthy that these two reports of Ibn 'Abbâs do not in any way specify the object seen by the Prophet.[2] A third version coming through 'Ikrima and given by Tirmidhî states that Ibn 'Abbâs said the Prophet "saw his Lord".[3] Tirmidhî adds that this is a good but strange report.[4] Another version coming through 'Ikrima says that Ibn 'Abbâs stated: "The Prophet said: 'I have seen my Lord' ".[5] It is noteworthy how the two versions coming through the same 'Ikrima differ from one another, one attributing the statement to Ibn 'Abbâs, and the other making it a statement of the Prophet's. Another report coming through the same 'Ikrima makes Ibn 'Abbâs say: "Do you wonder that Allah favoured Ibrâhîm with His friendship (خلة), Mûsâ with His speech (كلام) and Muḥammad with His sight?"[6] A yet another statement of Ibn 'Abbâs's suggests that the Prophet saw his Lord in dream.[7] Again, another version of his reported statement says that the Prophet saw his Lord once with his heart, and on another ocacsion with his eyes.[8]

Besides these varying reports attributed to Ibn 'Abbas, two other reports in this category deserve mention. One is that of Muḥammad ibn Ka'b al-Quraẓî. It says that some persons asked the Prophet whether he had seen his Lord, and in reply he stated that he had not seen Allah with his eyes, but twice with his heart.[9] The other is the famous report of 'Anas ibn Mâlik on *'Isrâ'* in the course of which it is narrated that the Prophet went so near his Lord that there remained a distance of less than two bow-lengths between the two. This statement is generally regarded as a mixing up of two separate incidents, resulting from a confusion made most probably by a subsequent narrator.[10]

1. *Ibid., n*o. 176 (ii). The expression is: (قال رآه بفؤاده مرتين) See also *Tirmidhî,* no. 3281.

2. It is very strange that Ibn Kathîr (or the scribe/editor) inserts the word *rabbahu* (ربه) in the statement (رأى محمد ربه مرتين) and cites *Muslim* as authority (see Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr,* VII, 422. None of the two versions in *Muslim* contains the word *rabbahu* in the text.

3. *Tirmidhî,* No. 3279. The text is: (... عن ابن عباس قال رأى محمد ربه)

4. *Ibid.* The text is: (هذا حديث حسن غريب)

5. *Musnad,* I, 290.

6. Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr,* VII, 424.

7. *Ibid.,* 368.

8. Ṭabarânî, *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabîr,* XII, 220, *hadîth* no. 12941.

9. Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr,* XXVII, 46-47; Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr,* VII, 424-425.

10. Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr,* VII, 422.

Thus the reports in the second category not only vary one from the other but they, as a whole, vary from the direct and clear statements in the Qur'ân and also from the statements in the first and the more weighty category of the reports. Hence the majority of the authorities are of the view, and this is the correct view, that the Prophet saw physically and with his eyes some of the greatest signs of his Lord, including His light which veiled Him, and Jibrîl in his real form for the second time.

CHAPTER XXXVII

PRELIMINARIES TO THE MIGRATION

I. THE FIRST HARBINGERS OF SUPPORT

It was the *ḥajj* season of the 11th year of the mission. The Prophet, in the course of his going round the camps of the various tribes seeking their help and support, came upon a group of people from Madina at 'Aqabah.[1] He enquired of them who they were. On their replying that they were of the Khazraj tribe of Madina he asked them whether they would sit and listen to him for a while. They agreed and sat with him. He then invited them to the worship of Allah Alone, explained Islam to them and recited to them some parts of the Qur'ân. These people were allies of the Jews who, as mentioned earlier, used to tell them that the time for the advent of a Prophet had drawn near and that they, with the help of that Prophet, would defeat and crush both 'Aws and Khazraj. When, therefore, the Prophet finished his talk these Madinites remarked among themselves that he was surely the Prophet of whom the Jews had spoken to them. Some of them even said to the others: "Let not the Jews steal a march on you and become the Prophet's followers before you." Thus talking among themselves they responded to the Prophet's call and embraced Islam. They then informed the Prophet saying: "We have left our people at home. There are no people among whom mutual jealousy, enmity and evil are more rife. Perhaps Allah will effect unity among them through you. We shall approach them and invite them to what you have asked of us and shall explain to them what we have responded to of this religion (*dîn*). So if Allah should unite them on this basis, then there will be no person more powerful than you."[2]

Although the report thus attributes the main reason for the Madinites' acceptance of Islam to what they had occasionally heard from the Jews about the appearance of a Prophet, it must not be supposed that they had not otherwise heard about him and about Islam previously to their meeting him at 'Aqabah; for news about him and about his message had already spread over all Arabia including Madina itself from where, as from other places, pilgrims and others had been visiting Makka throughout the previous dec-

1. At Minâ, near the First *Jamrah.*
2. Ibn Hishâm, I, 428-429; 'Abû Nu'aym, *Dalâ'il,* 298-299.

ade. They must not therefore have been unaware of the great upheavals that were taking place at Makka, including the boycott and blockade of Banû Hâshim by the other Quraysh clans, as a result of the Prophet's work there. Also persons like Swayd ibn Ṣâmit and 'Iyâs ibn Mu'âdh must not have remained completely silent about the Prophet when they had returned home after having met him. Thus the Madinites had already a vague knowledge of the Prophet and his mission from these sources as well as from the occasional remarks of the Jews. When therefore they met the Prophet personally and heard from him an exposition of Islam they were convinced of its truth and of him as Allah's Messenger.

A second thing to note about this report is what the Madinites lastly told the Prophet. It is clear from what they said, particularly the last clause of the report, that along with explaining Islam to them and calling them to the worship of Allah Alone, the Prophet had also sought their help and support in his task, as he indeed had been seeking from the other tribes. It was obviously in response to this part of the Prophet's conversation with them, which the report does not mention specifically, that the words, "then there will be no person more powerful than you", were spoken. Indeed another version of the report regarding this incident adds that the Prophet specifically sought their support so that he could deliver the message with which he had been entrusted by Allah. To this request the Madinites replied: "O Messenger of Allah, we are ready to struggle for the sake of Allah and His Messenger; but be it known to you that we (among ourselves) are enemies hating one another; and the battle of Bu'âth took place just about a year ago in which we killed one another. Hence if you come now, there may not be unity among us in respect of you. So let us return to our own men. Perhaps Allah may set our affairs right. Our appointment with you is the coming season (of *ḥajj*)."[1]

According to Ibn Isḥâq these harbingers of support were six in number. They were:

1. As'ad ibn Zurârah	of Banû al-Najjâr
2. 'Awf ibn al-Ḥârith	" "
3. Râfi' ibn Mâlik	of Banû Zurayq
4. Quṭbah ibn 'Âmir	of Banû Salimah

1. Ibn Sa'd, I, 218-219.

5. 'Uqbah ibn 'Âmir — of Banû Ḥarâm ibn Ka'b

6. Jâbir ibn 'Abd Allah — of Banû 'Ubayd ibn 'Adiyy.

On their return to Madina these people did indeed act according to their words. They spoke to their people about the Prophet and his affair so that there remained no family and clan among their people who did not discuss about him and Islam.[1]

According to another report the number of persons who met the Prophet at 'Aqabah on this first occasion was eight. They are: As'ad ibn Zurârah and Mu'âdh ibn Afrâ' of Banû al-Najjâr, Râfi' ibn Mâlik and Dhakwân ibn 'Abd Qays of Banû Zurayq, 'Ubâdah ibn al-Ṣâmit and 'Abû 'Abd al-Raḥmân (Yazîd ibn Tha'labah) of Banû Sâlim, 'Abû al-Ḥaytham ibn al-Tayyahân of Banû 'Abd al-Ashhal and 'Uaym ibn Sâ'idah of Banû 'Amr ibn 'Awf. Ibn Sa'd, who reproduces this report adds that Al-Wâqidî states that the list of six persons as given by Ibn Isḥâq "is to us the more trustworthy and it is the unaninmously accepted view."[2]

II. THE FIRST PLEDGE OF 'AQABAH

The six men proved true to their word and in the succeeding *ḥajj* season a group of 12 Madinan Muslims met the Prophet at 'Aqabah. Of them 10 were from the Khazraj and 2 were from the 'Aws tribe. They were:

Name	Clan
1. As'ad ibn Zurârah	of Banû al-Najjâr
2. 'Awf ibn al-Ḥârith	" "
3. Mu'âdh ibn al-Ḥârith (brother of above)	" "
4. Râfi' ibn Mâlik	of Banû Zurayq
5. Dhakwân ibn 'Abd Qays	" "
6. 'Ubâdah ibn al-Ṣâmit	of Banû 'Awf ibn al-Khazraj
7. 'Abû 'Abd al-Raḥmân (Yazîd ibn Tha'labah)	" "
8. Al-'Abbâs ibn 'Ubâdah ibn Naḍlah	of Banû Sâlim
9. 'Uqbah ibn 'Âmir	" "
10. Quṭbah ibn 'Âmir	of Banû Sawâd ibn Ghanm (the above ten from Khazraj)

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 429-430.
2. Ibn Sa'd, I, 218-219.

11. 'Abû al-Haytham ibn al-Tayyahân — of Banû 'Abd al-'Ashhal
12. 'Uaym ibn Sâ'idah — of Banû 'Amr ibn'Awf
(the above two from 'Aws)

It may be noted that among these persons five were from among those who had met the Prophet in the Previous year (i.e., nos. 1,2,4,9, and 10). More important is the fact that there is no difference of opinion among the authorities about these 12 persons being present at 'Aqabah in that year and making the oath of allegiance to the Prophet. The terms of the Pledge, as recorded by one of the participants, 'Ubâdah ibn al-Ṣâmit, were that they undertook:

(1) Not to set any partner to Allah;

(2) Not to steal;

(3) Not to commit adultery and fornication;

(4) Not to kill their babes;

(5) Not to fabricate any libel against anyone;

(6) Not to disobey the Prophet in any lawful matter; and

(7) To obey him and follow him in ease as well as in difficulty.

If they fulfilled these obligations their reward would be paradise; but if they violated any of these and received punishment for it in this world, that would be counted as atonement for that offence. But if the offence remained unknown till the Day of Judgement, then Allah would punish or forgive as He wills.[1]

It should be noted that the Prophet required them first and foremost to worship none but Allah Alone and to reform their character and conduct. And it was on those conditions that he required them to obey him only in lawful matters. This First Pledge of 'Aqabah is generally referred to as the "Ladies Pledge" (*bay'at al-Nisâ'*) because the injunction for fighting in the cause of Allah had not yet been revealed and these were the usual terms for the *bay'at* taken from ladies.[2] After having made this pledge the twelve

1. This is a gist of the terms as mentioned in the various versions of the report. See for instance *Bukhârî,* nos., 18, 3892, 3893, 3999, 4894, 6784, 6801, 6873, 7055, 7199, 7213, 7468; *Muslim,* nos. 1709, 1809; *Musnad,* III, 441; IV, 119; V, 318, 319, 320, 321, 323, 324; *Nasâ'î,* nos. 4149-4153 4160, 4161, 5002; *Ibn Mâjah,* no., 2866; *Ṭayâlisî,* no. 579; Al-Bayhaqî, *Dalâ'il,* II, 436-437; Ibn Hishâm, I, 433-434.

2. See Q. 60:12.

Madinan Muslims returned to their homes. According to one report the Prophet sent with them Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr to teach them the Qur'ân and about Islam;[1] but another report has it that on their return to Madina the *'anṣar* sent a request to the Prophet to send them a suitable person to teach them the Qur'ân and the injunctions of Islam. Accordingly the Prophet sent Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr to do the work. Muṣ'ab was indeed the first person whom the Prophet sent outside Makka and within Arabia as a preacher of Islam And he indeed proved successful in the task he was entrusted with.

III. MUṢ'AB'S WORK AND THE SPREAD OF ISLAM AT MADINA

At Madina Mus'ab took his residence with 'Abû Umâmah As'ad ibn Zurârah and dedicated himself to the task he was assigned. He came to be known there as the "Qur'ân teacher (*Muqri'*) and used to lead the Muslims there in prayer.[2] Ibn Isḥâq has also a report that it was during this period that 'Abû Umâmah As'ad ibn Zurârah used to gather his fellow Muslims of Madina on Friday and hold the *jumu'ah* prayer in the quarters of Banû Bayḍâ'. Those who joined the first *jumu'ah* prayer numbered forty.[3] Obviously As'ad ibn Zurârah and Mus'ab the teacher must have done so under instructions from the Prophet who also must have received the order by that time to perform the *jumu'ah* prayer.

The above information shows also that the number of Muslims at Madina at that time had reached at least forty. Indeed the more important aspect of Mus'ab's work at Madina was the preaching of Islam among its people; and he performed this work creditably, assisted by As'ad ibn Zurârah and other Muslims. The most notable of his successes in this respect was the conversion of two leaders of Banû 'Abd al-'Ashhal, Sa'd ibn Mu'âdh and 'Usayd ibn Ḥuḍayr, and through them of most of their tribe (Khazraj). Ibn Isḥâq gives an account of this important incident which runs as follows:

One day As'ad ibn Zurârah and Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr went out to preach Islam and sat by the side of a well in a garden belonging to Banû Ẓafr, a branch of Banû 'Abd al-'Ashhal. They were soon joined there by a number of new Muslims. Information about this assemblage soon reached Sa'd ibn

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 434.

2. Ibn Hishâm, I, 434; *Musnad,* IV, 284, 289; *Ṭayâlisî,* no. 704. 'Abû Nu'aym, *Dalâ'il,* 299.

3. Ibn Hishâm, I, 435; *Ibn Mâjah,* no. 1082; *Abû Da'ûd,* K. 2, b. 209.

Mu'âdh and 'Usayd ibn Ḥuḍayr who were till then polytheists and who were not well-disposed to the work As'ad and Muṣ'ab were doing at Madina. Hence Sa'd asked 'Usayd, who was with him at the time, to go to As'ad and Muṣ'ab and bid them to leave the place and never to attempt, in their words, to mislead their weak-minded people. Sa'd added that he would himself have gone there but that As'ad was his maternal cousin and he did not therefore like to quarrel with him directly on the issue. Accordingly 'Usayd took his lance and proceeded to the place in an agitated mood. Seeing him approach the spot As'ad whispered to Muṣ'ab saying that the person coming towards them was the leader of his people and therefore it would be of much good if he could be convinced of the truth of Islam. Muṣ'ab said that he would talk to him if he consented to sit with them for a while. On coming to the spot 'Usayd started abusing them and demanded to know what had brought them there and told them not to attempt to befool and mislead the innocent men of his tribe. He also asked them to leave the place instantly if they had any love for their lives. In reply to such stern words Muṣ'ab asked him with complete calm and composure whether he would like to sit and listen for a while and if he liked anything it was up to him to accept it; but if it was diagreeable to him in any way they would not like to do anything which he disliked and would be only ready to leave the place in no time. "Quite reasonable", remarked 'Usayd and after planting his spear in the ground sat down. Muṣ'ab then explained Islam to him and recited unto him some parts of the Qur'ân. Even before he finished his words he could realize from 'Usayd's countenance that a change had taken place in his mind. Indeed he was fully convinced of the truth of Islam. Hence when Muṣ'ab finished his recitation'Usayd simply expressed his admiration for what he had just heard and asked what should he do to be a Muslim. He was told that all that he neeeded doing was to take a bath, purify the clothes he wore, then utter the formula of monotheism and say two *raka'ahs* of prayer. 'Usayd did all these then and there and thus embraced Islam at the hand of Muṣ'ab. Not only that. He told Muṣ'ab and As'ad ibn Zurârah that he had left behind him another person who was a leader of his people and if he could be converted there would remain no person in the clan who would not embrace Islam. So saying he left the place promising to send Sa'd to them.

The change in 'Usayd was unmistakably reflected in his face. So when Sa'd saw him coming back in a different mood he remarked to those of his people who were around him: "By Allah, 'Usayd is coming back with a

countenance different from what he went with." 'Usayd had in the meantime hit upon an expedient to make Sa'd go to Muṣ'ab. Therefore as Sa'd asked him what he had done about the matter for which he had been sent he replied: "I have indeed spoken to the two men; and by Allah, I have not found any bad attitude in them. I asked them to refrain from what they were doing; and they said: 'We would do as you wish'. But it has so happened that Banû Ḥârithah have come out to kill As'ad ibn Zurârah because, as he is your maternal cousin, they want to harm and betray you thereby." Hearing this Sa'd's anger shot up. He instantly grasped the spear from 'Usayd's hand and proceeded to see and defend As'ad ibn Zurârah. On reaching the spot and finding As'ad and his companions safe and in a relaxed mood Sa'd realized that 'Usayd had purposely so manoeuvred to send him there that he might listen to them. With this realization he rudely asked them what business had brought them there, bidding them to leave the place in no time. Muṣ'ab politely asked him to sit down and listen, adding that if he liked anything he might accept it; and if he did not like it they would be only happy to withdraw. Indeed the same thing was repeated. Muṣ'ab explained Islam and recited some parts of the Qur'ân unto Sa'd. He was equally impressed, repeated the same acts and embraced Islam on the spot. As he came back to his people they made the same remark among themselves about him saying that he had returned with a countenance entirely different from what he had gone with. On coming to them he directly asked them what opinion they held about him. They replied in one voice that he was their noble and wise leader. Thereupon he told them that if that was the case, he would not speak to any man or woman of the clan until they embraced Islam. The report says that by the evening of the same day almost the entire clan of 'Abd al-'Ashhal embraced Islam, except some members of the family of 'Umayyah ibn Zayd.[1]

Even if the obviously dramatic touch given to the story and the ornamentation of the narration are discounted, there is no doubt that Sa'd ibn Mu'âdh and 'Usayd ibn Ḥuḍayr did embrace Islam at the instance of Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr and As'ad ibn Zurârah and that the two leaders of Banû 'Abd al-'Ashhal were in their turn instrumental in bringing about the conversion of most of the members of the clan to Islam. The account also gives a glimpse into the fact, which was only natural under the circumstances, that Muṣ'ab's

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 435-438; Al-Bayhaqî, *Dalâ'il,* II, 238-240; 'Abû Nu'aym. *Dalâ'il,* 307-308.

work was not looked at with equanimity by all the quarters at Madina. Indeed one version of the account of Sa'd ibn Mu'âdh's conversion attributed to 'Urwah ibn al-Zubayr states that Muṣ'ab's success among Banû 'Abd al-'Ashhal created misgivings even among Banû al-Najjâr, As'ad ibn Zurârah's own clan, who turned against him and compelled Muṣ'ab to leave his house. Muṣ'ab then took his quarters with Sa'd ibn Mu'âdh and with his assistance continued the work of preaching and teaching of the Qur'ân.[1] The extent of the progress of Islam at Madina during less than a year's efforts by Muṣ'ab ibn'Umayr is well reflected in the fact that in the following *ḥajj* season more than seventy Madinan Muslims went on polgrimage and participated in the Second Pledge of 'Aqabah.

IV. THE SECOND PLEDGE AT 'AQABAH (13TH YEAR OF THE MISSION)

According to Ibn Isḥâq Muṣ'ab returned to Makka before the *ḥajj* season.[2] During the *ḥajj* season the Muslims of Madina came on pilgrimage to Makka with the others of their people who were till then polytheists. Naturally the Muslims did not disclose the fact of their appointment with the Prophet to their polytheist compatriots. When, on completion of *ḥajj,* the time for meeting the Prophet drew near the Muslims thought it wise to strengthen their rank by taking into confidence 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr ibn Ḥarâm, one of the prominent leaders of Khazraj. They privately invited him to embrace Islam, telling him that since he was a nobleman and a leader of the community, they did not like that he should be fuel to hell-fire on his death. They also disclosed to him the fact of their appointment with the Prophet. The Muslims thus spoke to him obviously because they had noticed in him a disposition towards the truth. Indeed 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr acceded to their invitation and embraced Islam.[3]

By his inclusion the number of Madinan Muslims in the *ḥajj* group became seventy-three. These seventy-three, together with two female Muslims, Nusaybah bint Ka'b (of Banû Mâzin ibn al-Najjâr) and Asmâ' bint 'Amr ibn 'Adiyy ibn Nâbî (of Banû Salimah) participated in the meeting at 'Aqabah (near the First or Great *Jamrah* at Minâ). Lest their polytheist fellow-citizens should come to know of their move, the Muslims went to bed as

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 438.
2. *Ibid.,* 440-441.
3. *Ibid.,* 441.

usual with the others of their people in their respective camps. Then, when about one third of the night had passed and the others were deep asleep, they left their beds and silently went to the meeting place in small batches.

The Prophet came to the place at the appointed time accompanied by his uncle Al-'Abbâs ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. He had not yet embraced Islam, but he wanted to witness the affair of his nephew and to be sure about the sincerity and earnestness of the *anṣâr*. At the meeting he was the first to speak. Addressing the Madinans he said that Muḥammad (ﷺ), as they knew, was living in honour and safety in his own birthplace and his clan had so far protected him; but as he now desired to join the Madinans he ('Abbâs) asked them to consider the matter carefully, reminding them that if they were sure about fulfilling their undertaking and defending the Prophet against his opponents, then they should shoulder the responsibility, but if they thought that they would be constrained to forsake him and surrender him to the enemies after he had joined them then it was better for them to leave him as he was. Scarcely had Al-'Abbâs finished his words than the *anṣâr* replied saying: "We have heard you". Then addressing the Prophet they said. "Speak, O Messenger of Allah, and take for yourself and for your Lord what you like." Thereupon the Prophet addressed them. He first recited from the Qur'ân, invited them towards Allah, inspired them with love for Islam and then said: "I want your pledge that you shall defend me as you defend your women and children."[1] At this Al-Barâ' ibn Ma'rûr grasped the Prophet's hand and said: "Yes, by Him who has sent you with the truth, we shall certainly defend you against what we defend our families and children against, for by Allah, we are men of war and possessors of arms that we have inherited as seniors from seniors (i.e. from our fathers and forefathers)."[2] At that point Al-Barâ' was interrupted by Abû al-Haytham ibn al-Tayyahân who, addressing the Prophet said: "O Messenger of Allah, there is a bond (of treaty) between us and the people (i.e. the Jews) and we are going to sever that bond. But when we did that and Allah made your affair prevail, would you then return to your own people and leave us?" At this the Prophet smiled and then replied: "Nay, my blood is your blood, my life is your life. I am of you, and you are of me. I shall fight those whom you fight against; and I shall make peace

1. *Ibid.*

2. Ibn Hishâm, I, 442; *Musnad,* III, 323, 339, 461-462; Al-Ṭabarâbî, *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabîr,* XIX, 89; Al-Haythamî, *Majma' al-Zawâ'id,* VI, 47. The text runs as follows:

(أبايعكم على أن تمنعوني مما تمنعون منه نساءكم وأبناءكم)

with whom you make peace with."[1] Then 'Abû al-Haytham turned towards his own people and reminded them that their taking the Prophet with them meant that all the Arabs would turn against them and would throw at them as if from one bow. If therefore they were sure that they would sacrifice their everything and would under no circumstances abandon the Prophet, then they should make the pledge and undertake the responsibility. All of them in one voice cried out that they would fulfil their pledge and would never abandon the Prophet.[2]

Others also spoke on the occasion. Thus As'ad ibn Zurârah addressed his people saying in effect what 'Abû al-Haytham had said reminding them of the responsibility they were about to undertake and of the sure enmity of the Arabs of which they would be the common target by their action.[3] Similarly, Al-'Abbas ibn 'Ubâdah ibn Naḍlah al-'Anṣârî addressed his people saying: "O peopel of Khazraj, do you realize on what are you going to pledge yourselves to this man?" They said; "Yes". Al-'Abbas ibn'Ubâdah then explained saying: "You are going to pledge yourselves for fighting the black and red of men. So if you think that you will give up when trouble descends on you destroying your property and killing your chiefs, then give up now. For by Allah, your doing so will be a loss in this world and also in the hereafter. But if you are sure that you shall fulfil your obligations, even if your properties are destroyed and your chiefs are killed, then undertake it. For by Allah, that will be the best for you in this world and in the hereafter." They all replied: "Surely we shall take it, even at the cost of our properties and chiefs." After this Al-'Abbâs ibn 'Ubâdah turned towards the Prophet and asked: "What will be our reward, O Messenger of Allah, if we fulfil our pledge?" The Prophet said: "Paradise". "Stretch then your hand", said the people. The Prophet did so, and they took their oath.[4]

From these brief glimpses of the proceedings of that momentous night meeting at 'Aqabah it should be clear that apart from Al-'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's obtaining the assurances and promises of the *'anṣâr,* they themselves very carefully considered and weighed the implications and consequences of their action. They understood full well that they were com-

1. *Ibid.*
2. 'Abû Nu'aym, *Dalâ'il,* 304, 309.
3. *Musnad,* III, 322-323, 339-340; Ibn al-Jawzî, *Al-Wafâ,* 231
4. Ibn Hishâm, I, 446; *Musnad,* III, 322.

mitting themselves to fighting and laying down their lives, and to sacrificing their properties and men, for the sake of the Prophet and Islam, when the need for doing so arose and when the Prophet required them to do so. On the other hand, the Prophet's commitments also were made very clear. He equally undertook to become one of them, to fight and shed his blood for their sake. Further, he promised that even when victorious and successful he would not leave them, nor would he return to his people and birth-place. Above all, the *'anṣâr* obtained from him an assurance of the reward of paradise if they faithfully fulfilled their part of the pledge. The Second Pledge of 'Aqabah was thus truly a mutual pledge in which both sides undertook a clearly stipulated set of obligations and made solemn promises. And on a balancing of the account it would appear that the *'anṣâr* did indeed make a very favourable and profitable bargain. They secured the life-long adhesion of the Prophet to them and the eternal bliss of heaven for them. And when the time for trials came they did indeed put these two things above all other considerations.

The reports vary as regards the first person to make the pledge at the Prophet's hand. Ibn Isḥâq says that the people of Banû al-Najjâr claimed that it was As'ad ibn Zurârah, those of Banû 'Abd al-Ashhal said that it was'Abû al-Haytham ibn al-Tayyahân, while the report of Ka'b ibn Malik, who was one of the participants in the Pledge, says that it was Al-Barâ' ibn Ma'rûr.[1] Indeed the reports variously give these names. Most probably the differences or confusion have arisen on account of the fact that these three persons were the ones who mainly spoke in the meeting, addressing both the Prophet and their own people, and in the process declared their acceptance of the obligations. The context as well as the background of the devlopments in Madina suggest that most probably As'ad ibn Zurârah was the first person to formally make the pledge at the hand of the Prophet. All the others then made it.[2]

The terms of the Second Pledge of 'Aqabah, so far as the *'anṣâr* were concemed and as they are known from the different reports may be summarized as follows:[3]

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 447.

2. The two ladies made the *bay'ah* without holding the Prophet's hand. See *Bukhâri,* no. 5288.

3. See *Bukhâri,* nos. 7199, 7202; *Muslim,* no. 1841; *Musnad,* III, 322-323, 339-340, 441, 461; IV, 119-120; V, 314, 316, 318, 319, 321, 325; and al-Bayhaqî, *Dalâ'il,* II, 443, 452.

1. That they shall worship Allah Alone and shall not associate anything with Him.[1]
2. That they shall shelter and help the Prophet and his Companions (*muhâjirs*) when they migrate to Madina.[2]
3. That they shall defend the Prophet and his Companions as and against whomsoever as they (*the 'anṣar*) defended themselves, their families and children;[3]
4. That they shall bear the cost and financial obligations arising out of the above, whether it be easy or difficult for them.[4]
5. That they shall obey and follow the Prophet, in ease or in difficulty, and whether they liked it or not or whether it ran counter to their immediate interest.[5]
6. That they shall not dispute or contend with the lawful authority.[6]
7. That they shall exhort what is lawful and prohibit what is unlawful.[7]
8. That they shall, at all places and under all circumstances, speak out and uphold the truth and the cause of Allah, without fear of reproach or abuse.[8]

On the completion of the Pledge the Prophet asked the *'anṣâr* to select from among themselves 12 persons who would be lieutenants or leaders (*naqîb*) to look after and organize their affairs at Madina. So they selected 12 persons, nine from the Khazraj and three from the 'Aws tribe. They were as follows:

1. The expression is: (أسألكم لربي عز وجل أن تعبدوه ولا تشركوا به شيئا) (see for instance, *Musnad,* IV, 119-120)

2. The expression is: (أن تؤونا وتنصرونا / إذا قدمت يثرب) (See for instance *ibid;* also III, 340)

3. The expression is: (فتمنعوني مما تمنعون منه أنفسكم وأزواجكم وأبناءكم) (See for instance *Musnad,* III, 339-340)

4. The expression is: (والنفقة في العسر واليسر) (See for instance *ibid.*)

5. The expression is: (على السمع والطاعة في عسرنا ويسرنا ومنشطنا ومكرهنا والأثرة علينا) (See for instance *Musnad,* III, 441)

6. The expression is: (وأن لا ننازع الأمر أهله) (See for instance *ibid.;* also *Bukhârî, n*o. 7199; *Muslim,* no. 1841)

7. The expression is: (وعلى الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر) (See for instance *Musnad,* III, 322-323, 339-340)

8. The expression is: (وأن نقوم أو نقول بالحق حيثما كنا لا نخاف في الله لومة لائم) (See for instance *Bukhârî,* no. 7199; *Muslim,* no. 1841)

1. As'ad ibn Zurâra ('Abû Umâma)	of the Khazraj tribe	
2. Sa'd ibn al-Rabî' ibn 'Amr	"	"
3. 'Abd Allah ibn Rawâḥah ibn Tha'labah	"	"
4. Râfi' ibn Mâlik ibn al-'Ajlân	"	"
5. Al-Barâ' ibn Ma'rûr ibn Ṣakhr	"	"
6. 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr ibn Ḥarâm	"	"
7. 'Ubâdah ibn al-Ṣâmit ibn Qays	"	"
8. Sa'd ibn 'Ubâdah ibn Dulaym	"	"
9. Al-Mundhir ibn 'Amr ibn al-Khunays	"	"
10. 'Usayd ibn Ḥuḍayr ibn Simâk	of the 'Aws tribe	
11. Sa'd ibn Khaythamah ibn al-Ḥârith	"	"
12. Rifâ'ah ibn 'Abd al-Mundhir ibn Zubayr	"	"[1]

The proceedings of the meeting were conducted with all secrecy and expedition, the Prophet even asking the *'anṣâr* to shorten their speeches lest their polytheist compatriots on the one hand and the Quraysh people on the other should come to know of them. Yet, it appears, a *satan* (either of men or of jinn) detected what was going on. From the top of a nearby hillock he shouted out at the top of his voice and addressing the Quraysh said: "O men of the camps, the despicable one (meaning the Prophet) and the apostates (*ṣubâh*, pl. of *ṣâbi*) have just agreed on warring against you." At this the Prophet told the *'anṣâr* that it was a *satan* of Minâ. Then directing his word to the *satan* he said: "O enemy of Allah, I shall, by Allah, deal with you." He then asked the *'anṣâr* to hasten back to their respective camps. They did so. At the time of departing, Al-'Abbas ibn Naḍlah addressed the Prophet saying: "By Allah who has sent you with the truth, if you so wish, we shall with our swords sweep down upon the men of Minâ (i.e. the Quraysh) in the morrow" The Prophet said: "We have not yet received the orders to do that." So they returned to their camps and slept for the rest of the night.[2]

The matter did not remain, however, a complete secret. In the morning the leading men of Quraysh came to the camps of the Madinites and charged

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 443-444. The first seven names are given by Ibn Hishâm; the rest are given by Ibn Isḥâq. There is also some difference of opinion about the 12th person. Some mention him to be 'Abû al-Haytham ibn al-Tayyahân.

2. *Ibid.*, 447-448.

them saying: "It has come to our knowledge that you have come here to take out with you this our man from among us and that you have pledged yourselves to him for fighting us. By God, there are no people among the Arabs with whom we detest fighting more than with you." At this the unbelieving people of Madina were taken aback. They protested their innocence and swore by Allah that they knew nothing of the alleged affair. They were right; for they were really in the dark about the matter. The *'anṣâr,* however, exchanged meaningful glances with one another. After hearing such protestations of the Madinans, however, the Quraysh leaders, among whom was Al-Ḥârith ibn Hishâm ibn al-Mughîrah of Banû Makhzûm, left the place.[1]

The Quraysh did not leave the matter there. They made further enquiries about it and came to learn that it was a fact. In the meantime the pilgrims had left Minâ. Therefore a party of Quraysh people went out in hot pursuit of the *'anṣâr.* At a place called Adhâkir, which lies at about five miles from Makka, they came upon a party of the Madinans and succeeded in capturing Sa'd ibn 'Ubâdah and Al-Mundhir ibn 'Amr, both of whom were of the 12 *naqîbs.* Al-Mundhir succeeded, however, in overpowering his captors and escaped. Sa'd was taken a captive. His hands were tied to the neck and then he was dragged to Makka where he was beaten and tortured. An on-looker took pity on him and asked him whether there was anyone among the Quraysh with whom he had some acquaintance or understanding for mutual help and protection. Sa'd said that he knew Jubayr ibn Muṭ'im ibn 'Adiyy and Al-Ḥârith ibn Ḥarb ibn 'Umayyah whom he used to help and protect when they visited Madina on trade. The on-looker advised Sa'd to cry out for help by calling the two persons by their names. He did so. The Makkan individual then went to the two persons who were at the Ka'ba compound at the time and informed them that a Khazrajite named Sa'd ibn 'Ubâdah was being beaten and tortured at a particular place in the town and that he was calling them out for help. They recognized that he indeed used to protect them while at Madina. Hence they hurried to the spot, rescued Sa'd from his persecutors and let him return to his people.

V.THE SIGNIFICANCE AND NATURE OF THE SECOND 'AQABAH PLEDGE

Both in its immediate and far-reaching consequences the Second 'Aqabah Pledge may be regarded as the most important agreement ever con-

1. *Ibid.* 448-449.

cluded in the history of the world. It prepared the ground and provided the basis for the Muslims' and the Prophet's migration to Madina, the establishment of a bodypolitic there, the organization of the *muhajirs* and *'anṣâr* for defence, their ultimate victory over the forces of unbelief, the unification of all Arabia in the first instance and then of almost the entire ancient civilized world under one political system and, simultaneously, the onward march of Islam as an enlightening, civilizing and cultural force over the adjoining continents. No other treaty or agreement has proved to be so decisive and clear a turning point in the history of the world as a whole. The seventy-five men and women of Madina on the one hand, and the Prophet (accompanied by his uncle Al-'Abbâs ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib) on the other did indeed make history at 'Aqabah on that memorable night in 621-22 A.C.

The participants in that memorable act were quite aware of the implications of the agreement they made. The proceedings of the meeting and the speeches of the different persons show that they undertook the task and responsibilities with full knowledge and understanding of the shape of things to come. Such provisions of the agreement as required the *'anṣâr* to obey and follow the Prophet in ease and difficulty, to refrain from disputing and contesting the legally constituted authority and to lay down their lives and properties for the defence of the cause, all visualized the establishment of a bodypolitic. The provisions of the Second 'Aqabah Pledge were, so to say, the fundamental principles of the constitution of the subsequent state of Madina. No wonder, therefore, that a participant in that act, Ka'b ibn Mâlik, when old and blind, used to pride himself on being one of those who made the Pledge and to console himself over his having missed the battle of Badr by saying that to him participation in the Second Pledge of 'Aqabah was far dearer and more important than particicipation in the battle of Badr, though people talked more about the latter.[1] He was quite justified in his feeling.

In another respect the Second Pledge of 'Aqabah is unique in world history. No other historical agreement appears to have been carried out so fully, so faithfully and so willingly by both the parties to it. The *'anṣâr* cheerfully and ungrudgingly sheltered and gave quarters to the *muhâjirs*, shared their wealth and properties with the latter, fought and laid down their lives for the sake of Islam and the Prophet and did never deviate even a little from their promise of obeying and following him in ease and difficulty and even

1. *Bukhâri,* no. 3890.

against their own immediate interest. On the other hand the Prophet and the *muhâjirs* left their birth-place for good, adopted Madina and its people as their own land and brethren and did never return permanently to their birth-place even when the circumstances turned completely in their favour. Although the Prophet was undoubtedly sad when leaving Makka and never ceased sighing for it, he left it for ever, never to return there permanently. Even when visiting it on pilgrimage he did not consider it his residing place and emphasized this fact by performing the shortened prayer (*qaṣr*) there as prescribed for travellers from distant lands. The former Yathrib became for ever Madina (*Madînat al-Nabî*, City of the Prophet) not simply because he migrated there, nor simply because he made it the nucleus of the first Islamic state and the *terminus a quo* of the subsequent successes of Islam, but primarily because, according to the terms of the 'Aqabah agreement, he made it his own land, its people his own people — never leaving it and its people even when no more in need of them — and he lived there till the end of his life and lies buried there. What Madina is today in the world of Islam and in the heart of the Muslims is a direct result of the agreement at 'Aqabah.

Yet the agreement (Pledge) was made only verbally, not in writing. This is worth emphasizing. For the binding force behind both its conclusion and implementation was the power of faith and the dictates of conviction. When the *'anṣâr* told the Prophet at 'Aqabah: "Take (i.e. stipulate) O Messenger of Allah, for yourself and for your Lord whatever you like", it signified only the extent of their conviction, their dedication to Islam and their determination to undertake the hardest of obligations for its sake. It also means that the Second Pledge of 'Aqabah was the effect of the initial success of Islam at Madina, not the cause of it; though in its turn it proved to be the starting point for further successes of Islam.

One of the participants in the Pledge, 'Ubâdah ibn al-Ṣâmit, characterizes it as the 'Pledge For Fighting' (*bay'at al-ḥarb*).[1] So does Ibn Isḥâq who adds that this was so because the Prophet had by then received permission for fighting.[2] This latter statement is not correct. Permission to fight was given after the migration, as the *'âyahs* 22:39-40 containing that permission clearly indicate. These say: "Permission (to fight) is given to those who are being warred against....... who have been driven out of their homes" etc.

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 454; *Musnad,* V, 320.
2. Ibn Hishâm, I, 454.

Clearly the permission came subsequently to their having been driven out of their homes, i.e., after their migration. This is proved also by the Prophet's reply to Al-'Abbâs ibn 'Ubâdah ibn Naḍlah's overenthusiasm to start fighting the Quraysh immediately after the conclusion of the Pledge, which Ibn Isḥâq also notes.[1] The Prophet said: "We have not yet received orders to do that."[2] This does not mean, however, that 'Ubâdah ibn al-Ṣâmit's characterization of the Second 'Aqabah Pledge as the "Pledge for Fighting" is not correct. It indicates and emphasizes the nature of the obligation the participants undertook and their complete awareness of that. They clearly knew it and indicated it in their speeches that their taking the Prophet in their midst meant facing the hostility and attack not only of Quraysh but of the other Arabs as well; and that therefore they should be ready to fight and sacrifice their lives and properties for the sake of Islam and the Prophet. The Prophet also repeatedly asked them to consider thoroughly the consequences of the step they were about to take and to be prepared for defending him and his companions (تمنعوني). The Second Pledge of 'Aqabah was thus really a pledge for fighting in defence of the Prophet and Islam. It was essentially a defensive pact.

VI. REASONS FOR ISLAM'S SUCCESS AT MADINA

It has been stated above that the Second pledge of 'Aqabah was an effect of the initial success of Islam at Madina. As regards the reasons for this success, the first and foremost is Allah's special favour upon the Madinites. For, guidance emanates from Allah and it appears that it was His design that Madina should be the base for the success of Islam.

As regards the worldly reasons, the foremost is what 'Â'ishah (r.a.) pointed out while referring to the effects of the Bu'âth war. She stated that the Bu'âth war was in the nature of Allah 's preparing the ground for the acceptance of Islam and the Prophet at Madina. For, as a result of the war, most of the leaders of 'Aws and Khazraj were killed and the two tribes emerged from the war completely exhausted and divided.[3] Indeed they were in dire need of starting their life anew on a new basis of amity and peace and under a common and wise leader. Islam provided the new basis and the Prophet appeared to them to be the God-sent and natural leader to lead them to a life

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 454.
2. *Ibid.* See also *supra* p. 849; *Musnad,* I, 216 (report of Ibn Abbâs).
3. *Bukhârî,* nos. 3847, 3930.

of peace and unity.

A third reason was the existence of the Jews at Madina. It worked in two ways. On the one hand, the Jews themselves used to talk about the imminent appearance of a Prophet whom they would follow and with whose help they would eliminate the 'Aws and the Khazraj from Madina. Naturally this created an inquisitiveness among the latter about the coming Prophet. As already indicated,[1] this natural inquisitiveness on their part was one of the reasons for their acceptance of Islam when some of them met the Prophet for the first time at 'Aqabah. On the other hand, the Jews used to exploit the 'Aws and the Khazraj financially by means of a widespread and extortionate net-work of usury and also to play the one tribe against the other. Both the tribes had at last come to see through this game of the Jews and had grown determined for emancipation from the vicious circle of exploitation. For the same reason the two tribes were unwilling to unite themselves under the leadership of the Jews or of anyone of their protégés. Islam provided the means for that emancipation and the Prophet provided the much-needed common leadership. Thus, if the corruption and perversion of Allah's revelations effected by the Jews and the Christians of the time in general provided the background for the rise of Islam, the financial exploitation and political machiavellism of the Jews of Madina paved the way for the phenomenal success of Islam among its non-Jewish inhabitants.

In this connection reference should be made to the claim often made by Judaeo-Christian writers that the monotheism of the Jews had predisposed the 'Aws and the Khazraj towards the monotheism offered by Islam. The claim is as specious as is the claim that Islam owes its origin to Judaeo-Christian influences. Indeed the former plea is only an extension of the latter. The precepts and practices of the Jews of Madina repelled rather than attracted the non-Jewish population towards Judaism. If the monotheism of the latter had in any way appealed to them, there would have been some noticeable inclination among them towards it in the years immediately preceding the rise of Islam or the Prophet's migration to Madina. The sources do not, however, give that impression.

A fourth factor in Islam's success at Madina may be found in the nature and temperament of the people of the place. Just as the climate of the place differs from that of Makka, so also its inhabitants, in contrast with those of

1. *Supra,* pp. 837-838.

Makka, are by nature more mild and accommodative. This distinction between the nature and temper respectively of the two places and their peoples are discernible even today. Naturally, therefore, Islam received a more sympathetic and intelligent reception at Madina.

Last but not least, as one writer points out,[1] the main factors that account for the Makkan opposition to Islam were totally absent in Madina. One of the foremost reasons for the Makkan leaders' opposition to Islam was their jealousy and pride born mainly out of their familiarity with the Prophet. He was one of their own men born and brought up amidst them. Hence the Makkan elders looked upon him with that natural jealousy which familiarity breeds. They could not just make themselves accept the leadership and guidance of one who was only a junior member of their society and of whom they, by virtue of seniority in age and blood-relationship, expected only obedience and subordination, and whom they did not think in any way entitled to supersede the elders in leadership and command. This natural cause of opposition was simply absent in Madina. Secondly, the Makkan elders constituted a priestly class whose social primacy and financial interests were bound up with the maintenance and continuance of the system of religious rites and worship that had grown round the Ka'ba. Islam and the Prophet posed a direct threat to that vested interest. It was this priestly class, the elders, who had mainly organized the opposition at Makka. At Madina there was no such priestly class of leaders with vested interest to guard against any threat to it. Hence the Prophet and Islam found there a rather ready acceptance.

When all this is said, however, it must not be overlooked that it was the inherent quality of Islam and its teachings, and the character and personality of the Prophet which, above everything else, impressed the Madinans most.

1. Akram Khân, *Mustafâ Charit,* (Bengali text), 4th revised edn. Dhaka, 1975, pp. 473-475.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE MIGRATION TO MADINA

I. CAUSES AND NATURE OF THE MIGRATION

The Second 'Aqaba Pledge prepared the ground for the Muslims' as well as the Prophet's migration to Madina. The 'Aqaba Pledge was indeed the outcome of at least three years of the Prophet's efforts to find support and a suitable base for his work of propagating the truth with which he had been entrusted by Allah and for which purpose he had been approaching the tribes outside Makka. Similarly the migration to Madina of both the Muslims and the Prophet was effected with careful plans and preparations. It was no sudden act done on the spur of the moment, nor carried out haphazardly to avoid an unexpected emergency. For sometime past it had become clear to the Prophet as well as to the Muslims that they must look elsewhere for support and for a base of work; and the primary consideration all through had been to further the cause of Islam. Neither the approach to the tribes nor the migration to Madina were steps taken solely or primarily for the Prophet's personal safety, nor at all for furthering his own interest and ambition. Nothing illustrates this fact more clearly than his refusal to accept Ṭufayl ibn 'Amr al-Dawsî's proposal to him to secure himself in the strong fortress of the Daws tribe where there were strong men to take care of his defence.[1] It should also be recalled that he had also refused the offer of help by some tribes just for gaining and sharing with them the political power over Arabia as a whole.[2] The migration to Madina was not simply a migration in the geographical sense of moving out from one place to another, nor a measure of political strategy or personal safety. The guiding spirit and the overriding consideration was to serve the cause of Allah and of Islam. It has therefore been very aptly characterized in the Qur'ân as well as in the tradition as a "migration to Allah and His Messenger" (*hijrah ilâ Allah wa rasûlihi*).

The nature and purpose of the migration explain also its underlying cause. The Muslims and the Prophet migrated to Madina because it was no longer feasible or possible for them to practise and propagate Islam at Makka. In other words, the sole cause of the migration was the Quraysh leaders' opposition to Islam. The nature and aspects of that opposition have

1. *Muslim,* no. 116; *Musnad,* III, 370.
2. See *supra,* pp. 815-817.

been discussed in a previous chapter.[1] It may only be pointed out here that the Qur'ân and the traditions, while referring to the migration, allude at the same time to its causes too. Thus the Qur'ân specifically mentions as the causes of the migration that the Muslims were:

(a) oppressed on account of their faith (*ẓulimû* ظلموا);[2]

(b) jeopardized in their faith (*futinû* فتنوا), i.e., they were reduced, by hook or by crook, into a situation of either verbally recanting or not being able to practise Islam;[3]

(c) persecuted and driven out (*'ûdhû* أوذوا and *'ukhrijû* أخرجوا).[4]

The reports confirm and supplement these statements about the causes of the migration by saying that while the Prophet was disbelieved and driven out of his home, the Muslims were oppressed, persecuted, jeopardized in their faith and driven out of their homes and property.[5]

It may be recalled that a few years earlier a number of Muslims had migrated to Abyssinia. The migration to Madina, however, differs from the Abyssinian migration in a number of ways. In the case of the migration to Abyssinia the Prophet was concerned mainly or solely for the safety of the early Muslims and their faith. He advised them to betake themselves there pointing out distinctly to them that there they would get both personal safety and freedom for practising their faith. He himself did not plan to leave Makka obviously because he had till then not been despaired of it and expected to bring about its conversion by continuing to work there. In the case of migration to Madina the situation was completely different. The Prophet had found that there was no more chance of making further progress for Islam or of coninuing his work at Makka. Moreover, his people had then definitely abandoned and ousted him. Hence he sought for a new base from where he could discharge the duty imposed on him. He not only thought of going to that place but also of making it the centre of his unfinished work. Hence, secondly, he prepared the ground first by inviting the people of his desired place of migration to embrace Islam and, when some of them did so,

1. See Chapter XV.
2. 16 (*al-Naḥl*): 41 = ﴿والّذين هاجروا فى اللّه من بعد ما ظلموا...﴾
3. 16:110 = ﴿...للّذين هاجروا من بعد ما فتنوا...﴾
4. 3 ('Al *'Imrân*): 195 = ﴿فالّذين هاجروا وأخرجوا من ديـٰرهم وأوذوا فى سبيلى...﴾ and 59 (Al-*Ḥashr*): 8= ﴿...المهـٰجرين الّذين أخرجوا من ديـٰرهم وأموالهم...﴾
5. See for instance *Bukhârî,* nos. 3900 and 3901; Ibn Hishâm, I, 467.

he further prepared the field by sending a sutiable person to teach and propagate Islam there in order to get a sizeable number of persons over to the faith. In the case of the migration to Abyssinia no such preliminary work was done, because there was no plan on the Prophet's part to go there himself and make that place the base for his work. Thirdly, and arising out of the last mentioned fact, the Prophet, as the final stage of preparation, came to a definite understanding and concluded a clearly termed pledge with the Muslims (*'anṣâr*) of Madina whereby he himself undertook to go over to them and remain with them as long as he lived, and they undertook to obey the injunctions of Islam and sacrifice their everything for the sake of Allah and His Messenger. No such prior agreement or pledge was made with any party of the Abyssinians because the nature and purpose of the Muslims' migration there were totally different. The migration to Madina was the result of a bilateral and mutual agreement; that to Abyssinia was simply a unilateral seeking of refuge by a group of persecuted people who had suffered for conscience's sake. Last but not least, and also arising out of the last mentioned fact, the migration to Abyssinia was temporary in nature. There was no objection to the emigrants' returning to Makka and indeed in the course of time they did all return from there. The migration to Madina, on the other hand, was permanent in nature, in that neither the Prophet nor the other *muhâjirs* did return to Makka permanently. The subsequent conquest of Makka was no victorious coming back as such. There was no retaking possession of the houses and properties left at the time of the migration.

II. MIGRATION OF THE COMPANIONS

When the preliminary work was over the Prophet, according to Ibn Isḥâq, pointed out to the Muslims saying: "Allah the Mighty and Glorious has provided for you brethren (in faith) and a home where you would find security".[1] It is also on record that the Prophet had previously been shown in dream the place of migration which was full of date palms and which he now recognized to be Madina.[2] On receiving the Prophet's instructions the Muslims, including those who had returned from Abyssinia, started migrating to Madina in batches. The Prophet did not migrate first, but saw to it that his companions accomplished their migration peacefully and safely, and awaited Allah's specific directive to himself for leaving Makka.

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 468.
2. *Bukhârî,* no. 3905.

According to Ibn Isḥâq[1] the first person to migrate to Madina was 'Abû Salamah ('Abd Allah) ibn Asad of Banû Makhzûm. He had previously migrated to Abyssinia but had returned to Makka. His clan, however, renewed their persecution upon him so that as soon as he came to know of the acceptance of Islam by a number of people of Madina he started for migrating there. This was, as Ibn Isḥâq puts it,"a year before the 'Aqabah Pledge". Obviously his reference here is to the Second 'Aqabah Pledge. It would thus appear that 'Abû Salamah migrated to Madina almost immediately after the conclusion of the first 'Aqabah Pledge.

'Abû Salamah's migration, however, was no peaceful affair. His wife 'Umm Salamah (subsequently *'Umm al-Mu'minîn*) gives a very touching account of the event. She states that as soon as her husband started for Madina taking her with him and making her ride on a camel with her child on her lap, her parental relatives obstructed the way and told 'Abû Salamah that though he was free to betake himself wherever he liked, they would not allow him to take their daughter away with him. So saying they in fact forcibly snatched her away from her husband. At this turn of the event 'Abû Salamah's parental relatives intervened, not quite in his support, but rather against the other party. They told 'Umm Salamah's relatives that they could take their daughter with them but they had no right to the child who was their son ('Abû Salamah's parental relatives) and therefore belonged to them. They then forcibly took the child from the other party. 'Umm Salamah states that in the process of dragging by the two parties the joint of one arm of the child was displaced. Thus, at the point of their departure for Madina the three members of the small family were separated from one another by their own blood relations. Thus separated from his child and wife 'Abû Salamah alone went to Madina. 'Umm Salamah states that she remained separated from her husband and child for about a year. During that period she used every day to go to the spot where she had been separated from her husband and child and to sit there weeping till evening. At last one of her relatives took pity on her and requested the others to let her go to her husband. Similarly her husband's relatives also relaxed their attitude and returned the child to her. Then taking the child with her she started for Madina all alone, riding on a camel. When she arrived at Tan'îm, some five miles from Makka, 'Uthmân ibn Ṭalḥah ibn 'Abî Ṭalḥah of Banû 'Abd al-Dâr happened

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 468.

to meet her. He recognized her and on coming to know that she was proceeding to Madina all alone he considered it too desperate on her part and too beneath his manliness to allow her so to proceed alone. He therefore volunteered to lead her to Madina. He then caught the rope of her camel and so led and accompanied her all the way to Qubâ' in the vicinity of Madina where her husband was staying. 'Umm Salamah states that 'Uthman ibn Ṭalḥah treated her with due respect and courtesy and that she had never come across such a noble and honest person.[1]

It should be mentioned here that a report of Al-Barâ' ibn 'Âzib (an *'anṣârî*) says that the first persons "to come to us" were Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr and Ibn 'Umm Maktûm who used to teach the *'anṣâr* the Qur'ân. They were followed by Bilâl, Sa'd, and 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir. Then came 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb with twenty others, after which the Prophet arrived at Madina.[2]

So far as Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr is concerned it has been seen before[3] that after the first 'Aqabah Pledge he was commissioned by the Prophet to teach to *'anṣâr* the Qur'ân and to preach Islam at Madina. He returned to Makka, however, before the conclusion of the Second 'Aqabah Pledge and then migrated to Madina when, after its conclusion, the Prophet advised the Muslims to do so. Most probably the above mentioned report refers either to Muṣ'ab's first sojourn at Madina as a Qur'ân teacher and preacher or to his migration there as the first person after the conclusion of the Second Pledge of 'Aqabah. 'Abû Salamahs case is different in that he migrated to Madina, as Ibn Isḥâq specifically mentions, a year before the 'Aqabah Pledge. And since he did not return to Makka, Ibn Isḥâq's statement that he was the first person to migrate is substantially correct. It would also appear from the above mentioned report that Ibn 'Umm Maktûm also worked for sometime along with Muṣ'ab as Qur'ân teacher for the *'anṣâr*. In all likelihood this was after the Second 'Aqabah Pledge. As regards 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭab and his group of *muhâjirs* it is definite that they migrated after the Second 'Aqabah Pledge and therefore after 'Abû Salamah. So did Bilâl, Sa'd, 'Ammâr and the others. 'Umar himself gives a rather detailed account of his migration which Ibn Isḥâq reproduces and which will be noticed presently.

1. *Ibid.*, 469-470. 'Uthmân ibn Ṭalḥah was at the time an unbeliever. He embraced Islam after the treaty of Ḥudaybiyah and migrated to Madina along with Khâild ibn al-Walîd. He attained martyrdom at the battle of Ajnâdayn.

2. *Bukhârî*, nos. 3924, 3925.

3. *Supra*, pp. 841-844.

After the arrival of the first *muhâjir* at Madina four persons from among the '*anṣâr* went to Makka. They were Dhakwân ibn 'Abd Qays, 'Uqbah ibn Wahb, Al-'Abbâs ibn 'Ubâdah ibn Naḍlah and Ziyâd ibn Labîd. They subsequently returned to Madina along with the different batches of *muhâjirs* from Makka. For this reason these four persons were known as *Muhâjirî Anṣârî*.[1] This fact shows that the process of migration was completed with perfect coordination with the '*anṣâr*.

According to Ibn Isḥâq, the next person after 'Abû Salamah to migrate to Madina was 'Âmir ibn Rabî'ah, a confederate of Banû 'Adiyy ibn Ka'b. He went with his wife Laylâ bint 'Abî Ḥathmah ibn Ghanm of the same clan. They were followed by the Jaḥsh family and the other members of Banû Ghanm ibn Dûdân, confederates of Banû 'Umayyah ibn 'Abd Shams. In fact all members of Banû Ghanm ibn Dûdân, men, women and children, went in a body taking with them whatever of their belongings they could carry and leaving their homes a deserted place. The group included, of men, 'Abd Allah ibn Jaḥsh ibn Ri'âb, his brother 'Abû Aḥmad ('Abd ibn Jaḥsh), 'Ukâshah ibn Miḥṣin, Shujâ' ibn Wahb, 'Uqbah ibn Wahb, Arbid ibn Ḥumayyirah (or Ḥumayrah), Munqidh ibn Nabâtah, Sa'îd ibn Ruqaysh, Muḥriz ibn Naḍlah, Yazîd ibn Ruqaysh, Qays ibn Jâbir, 'Amr ibn Miḥṣin, Mâlik ibn 'Amr, Safwân ibn 'Amr, Thaqf ibn 'Amr, Rabî'ah ibn Aktham, Al-Zubayr ibn 'Ubayd, Tammâm ibn 'Ubaydah, Sakhbarah ibn 'Ubaydah and Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Jaḥsh. Of the ladies there were Al-Far'ah bint 'Abî Sufyân ibn Ḥarb (wife of 'Abû Aḥmad), Zaynab bint Jaḥsh (wife of Zayd ibn Ḥârithah, later on *'Umm al-Mu'minîn)*, 'Umm Ḥabîb bint Jaḥsh (wife of 'Abd al-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf), Ḥamnah bint Jaḥsh (wife of Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr). Judâmah bint Jandal, 'Umm Qays bint Miḥṣin, Umm Ḥabîb bint Thumâmah, 'Âminah bint Ruqaysh and Sakhbarah bint Tamîm.[2]

The migration of all these people naturally turned their homes into a deserted place. It is related by Ibn Isḥâq that once 'Utbah ibn Rabî'ah, Al-'Abbâs ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib and 'Abû Jahl happened to pass by the place. Looking at the empty houses 'Utbah sighed and regretfully remarked that the homes of Banû Jaḥsh had become a deserted place. At this 'Abû Jahl remarked tauntingly, pointing to Al-'Abbâs, "This is the work of this our brother's son. He has caused divisions in our society, brought about diffe-

1. Ibn Sa'd, I, 226.
2. Ibn Hishâm, I, 470-472.

rences in our affairs and has separated us, one from the other."[1]

The next mentionable group of companions to migrate to Madina was that led by 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb. It is related that he was accompanied by some twenty persons from among his family, relatives and others. Ibn Isḥâq gives 'Umar's own story of the event. It says 'Umar, 'Ayyâsh ibn 'Abî Rabî'ah and Hishâm ibn al-'Âṣ ibn Wâ'il agreed among themselves that they would meet together in the following morning at a place called al-Tanâdub, about ten miles from Makka; and if any of them failed to turn up by the agreed time, it would be assumed that he had been caught and detained. So the other two would proceed without him towards Madina. In the following morning 'Umar and 'Ayyâsh ibn 'Abî Rabî'ah turned up at the spot in time, but Hishâm ibn al-'Âṣ ibn Wâ'il was detained and could not come up. Hence 'Umar and 'Ayyâsh, with the others of the group, left for Madina. On their arrival there they stayed with the people of Banû 'Amr ibn 'Awf at Qubâ'. Shortly afterwards 'Abû Jahl ibn Hishâm and his brother Al-Ḥârith ibn Hishâm arrived at Qubâ' for the purpose of luring 'Ayyâsh back to Makka; for he was their uterine brother as well as paternal cousin. They told him that their mother had been so upset at his migration that she had vowed not to comb her hair nor to take shelter from the sun till her son 'Ayyâsh returned to Makka. They therefore asked him to go back to Makka just for once to see his mother and thus enable her to release herself from her vow. 'Ayyâsh was moved at the story and consulted 'Umar, telling him that he ('Ayyâsh) liked to go to Makka just temporarily for the sake of his mother as well as to bring his wealth which he had hastily left there. 'Umar saw through 'Âbû Jahl's game and warned 'Ayyâsh not to step into the trap, adding that his mother would get over the shock in the course of time and would start living a normal life. 'Umar further said that if it was the question of money he had enough with him and he would give half of what he had to 'Ayyâsh. The latter was, however, overpowered by his affection for his mother and insisted on going back. At last 'Umar gave one of his strongest camels to 'Ayyâsh, asking him to travel on that animal and advised him that if he detected any bad faith on his companions' part he would be able to hurry back to Madina on that camel and they would not be able to overtake him with their camels. 'Umar's fears proved quite true. For, as they went some way towards Makka, 'Abû Jahl deceived 'Ayyâsh into getting down

1. *Ibid.*, 471.

from his camel and then the two overpowered him, tied him, took him a captive to Makka and kept him confined there. Ibn Isḥâq adds that when they reached Makka it was daytime and 'Abû Jahl, addressing the onlookers, said: "Thus have we done with our fool; so you all should do like this with your fools."[1] Subsequently, however, Hishâm ibn al-'Âṣ ibn Wâ'il escaped and came to Madina on receipt of a letter from 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb. This was, however, after the Prophet's migration there.[2] Similarly 'Ayyâsh ibn 'Abî Rabî'ah also succeeded in escaping and returning to Madina along with some others at a subsequent date.[3]

The details of migration of the other prominent companions like Ḥamzah ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân, 'Uthmân ibn Maẓ'ûn, 'Abd al-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf, 'Abû Ḥudhayfah ibn 'Utbah ibn Rabî'ah and others are not known. Most probably they succeeded in accomplishing their migartion without any untoward event. On the whole, almost all the companions of the Prophet succeeded in migrating to Madina except those who were detained and persecuted by the Quraysh leaders or were incapacitated by their personal difficulties or other circumstances. These people, together with the Prophet,'Abû Bakr and 'Alî ibn 'Abî Ṭâlib remained to migrate.[4] One of those who migrated clearly after the Prophet was Al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm who, together with a few other Muslims, had been away to Syria on a trade journey and who, on their return journey, met the Prophet on the way when he was migrating to Madina.[5] Most probably they had left for Syria before the Prophet issued instructions to the Muslims to migrate to Madina.

Similarly Ṣuhayb ibn Sinân also migrated after the Prophet. It is reported that when Ṣuhayb started for Madina the Quraysh people obstructed him saying that since he had originally come to their city as a poor man and had thereafter made a considerable fortune by trading there, they would not allow him to escape with his wealth. They indeed misjudged the depth of Ṣuhayb's faith; for he immediately asked them whether they would allow him to depart if he surrendered to them all his wealth and possessions. They

1. *Ibid.*, 474-475.
2. *Ibid.*, 475-476.
3. *Ibid.* See also *Bukhârî*, no. 4560 and *Fatḥ al-Bârî*, VIII, 74-75. The story given by Ibn Hishâm (I, 476) of Al-Walîd ibn al-Walîd's adventure in rescuing the two from Makka is not correct, for Al-Walîd ibn al-Walîd embraced Islam after the battle of Badr.
4. Ibn Hishâm, I, 480; Ibn Sa'd, I, 226.
5. *Bukhârî*, no. 3905.

agreed to do so. Thereupon Ṣuhayb surrendered to them his wealth and valuables, including his savings of gold and thus procured his release from their hands. When he arrived at Madina and the Prophet came to know of this he remarked that Ṣuhayb had indeed made a very profitable deal.[1] It is further reported that the Qur'ânic passage 2:207, "Those of men who sell themselves seeking Allah's pleasure, etc.", was revealed with reference to Ṣuhayb and the others like him who sacrificed their material interests for the sake of migrating to Allah and His Messenger.[2]

No less bright were the examples of sacrifice made by the *'anṣâr* and their generosity to the *muhâjirs.* They were received with all care, cordiality and preparation. They were provided with suitable quarters to stay in and with all the immediate necessaries of life. For that purpose the *'anṣâr* distributed the *muhâjirs* among themselves, each playing host to as many as his means allowed him to do. Sometimes they drew lots to decide who of the *muhâjirs* should go to whom. This they did not because there was any unwillingness on anyone's part to share the responsibility but because they vied with one another for playing hosts to the *muhâjirs.* 'Umm al-'Alâ', an *'anṣârî* lady, states that when the lot was drawn, it fell to her family to take in 'Uthmân ibn Maẓ'ûn. They did so; but he soon fell ill and died shortly afterwards.[3]

Ibn Isḥâq has preserved for us an account of the distribution of the *muhâjirs* among the *'anṣâr.* Though not comprehensive, the information given by him illustrates how orderly and systematic a way in which the *muhâjirs* were received at Madina.[4] The information may be tabulated as follows:

Muhâjirs	*Hosts*
(a) 'Abû Salamah ibn 'Abd al-Asad 'Âmir ibn Rabî'ah 'Abd Allah ibn Jaḥsh 'Abû Aḥmad ('Abd ibn Jaḥsh)	(a) Mibshar Ibn'Abd al-Mundhir ibn Zanbar of Banû 'Amr ibn 'Awf, at Qubâ'.
(b) 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb	(b) Rifâ'ah ibn'Abd al-Mundhir ibn

1. Ibn Hishâm, I., 477.
2. See for instance Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr,* I, 360.
3. *Bukhâri,* no. 3929.
4. Ibn Hishâm, I, pp. 47:, 476-480.

Muhâjirs	*Hosts*
Zayd ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (brother of the above) 'Amr ibn Surâqah ibn al-Mu'tamar 'Abd ibn Surâqah ibn al-Mu'tamar (brother of above) Khunays ibn Ḥudhafah al-Sahmî ('Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb's son-in-law, husband of Ḥafṣah, subsequently *'Umm al-Mu'minîn)* Sa'îd ibn Zayd ibn 'Amr ibn Nufayl Wâqid ibn 'Abd Allah al-Tamîmî Khawlâ ibn Abî Khawlâ Mâlik ibn Abî Khawlâ 'Iyâs ibn al-Bukayr 'Âqil ibn al-Bukayr 'Âmir ibn al-Bukayr Khâlid ibn al-Bukayr (with their confederates of Banû Sa'd ibn Layth) 'Ayyâsh ibn 'Abî Rabî'ah	Zanbar, of Banû 'Amr ibn 'Awf, at Qubâ'.
(c) Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubayd Allah ibn[1] 'Uthmân Ṣuhayb ibn Sinân	(c) Khubayb ibn 'Isâf, of Banû Balḥârith ibn al-Khazraj, at al-Sunḥ (modern 'Awâlî locality of Madina)
(d) Ḥamzah ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib Zayd ibn Ḥârithah Abû Marthad Karnâj ibn Ḥiṣn Marthad al-Ghanawî (son of above) 'Anasah 'Abû Kabshah (Salîm)	(d) Kulthum ibn Hidm, of Banû 'Amr ibn 'Awf, at Qubâ'. (According to another saying they stayed with Sa'd ibn Khaythamah)

1. According to another saying Ṭalḥah stayed with As'ad ibn Zurârah of Banû 'Abd al-'Ashhal.

Muhâjirs	*Hosts*
(e) ‘Ubaydah ibn al-Ḥârith ibn al-Muṭṭalib Ṭufayl ibn al-Ḥârith (brother of above) Al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥârith Misṭaḥ ibn ‘Uthâthah ibn ’Abbâd Swaybit ibn Sa‘d ibn Ḥuraymlah Ṭulayb ibn ‘Umayr Khabbâb ibn al-Aritt	(e) ‘Abd Allah ibn Salamah, of Banû Bal‘ajlân, at Qubâ’.
(f) ‘Abd al-Raḥmân ibn ‘Awf, with a party of other *muhâjirs*.	(f) Sa‘d ibn al-Rabî‘, of Banû Balhârith ibn al-Khazraj, at Qubâ’.
(g) Al-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwâm ’Abû Sabrah ibn Abî Ruhm	(g) Mundhir ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Uḥayḥah, of Banû Jahjabâ, at al-‘Usbah
(h) Muṣ‘ab ibn ‘Umayr ibn Hâshim	(h) Sa‘d ibn Mu‘âdh ibn al-Nu‘mân, of Banû ‘Abd al-’Ashhal.
(i) ’Abû Ḥudhayfah ibn ‘Utbah ibn Rabî‘ah Sâlîm (servant of the above) ‘Utbah ibn Ghazwân ibn Jâbir	(i) ‘Abbâd ibn Bishr ibn Waqsh, of Banû ‘Abd al-’Ashhal.
(j) ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Affân	(j) ’Aws ibn Thâbit ibn al-Mundhir (brother of Ḥassân ibn Thâbit) of Banû al-Najjâr.
(k) A group of bachelor *muhâjirs*	(k) Sa‘d ibn Khaythamah

It should be noted that this distribution did not remain constant but changed from time to time. Others who are not mentioned here were understandably distributed similarly among the ’*anṣâr*. The facts noted above illustrate, in the first place, that the migration was carried out in a planned, organized and coordinated way. It was no haphazard flight, though the very fact of leaving their birth-place, their hearth and home and, in most cases, the major part of their properties and possessions entailed on the *muhâjirs* no inconsiderable dislocation and hardships. The presence of at least four of the

'anṣâr at Makka, who had come all the way from Madina, during the early phase of the migration, is only indicative of the coordination between Makka and Madina in this respect. Secondly, though the *muhâjirs* left Makka as silently and as carefully as possible, their departures could not just be kept a secret from their adversaries. For the departure of whole families and in a number of cases the desertion of entire homes could not be kept unobserved by their neighbours. Thirdly, and arising out of this fact, the Quraysh leaders, as they came to know of the movement, attempted to prevent the migration from taking place. This was only natural on their part; but the very nature of the movement imposed certain insurmountable obstacles in their way. They could and did indeed obstruct, capture, detain and persecute those whom they could; but they could not simply have stopped everyone from going; for the Muslims left mostly in small groups, at unspecified hours and over a period of not less than two months. Hence the Quraysh leaders could have prevented the migration only if they could place the city virtually in a state of blockade, closing and effectively guarding all the exits from it for as long as there remained the possibility for the Muslims to migrate. The geographical features of Makka and its prevailing social conditions rendered the adoption of such a preventive measure on the Quraysh leaders' part out of the question. Moreover, sometimes the Muslims moved out in such a sizeable group as would enable them to defend themselves not only against wayside bandits but also against the motley of opponents the Quraysh leaders could hastily muster. The report given by Ibn Hishâm of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb's challenging anyone to face him and obstruct his migration may or may not be correct; but it was no easy matter for the Quraysh leaders, naturally demoralized by a sense of their aggressivenss and highhandedness towards their own kinsmen, to face and obstruct such a determined group of youths inspired by the force of their conviction and ready to lay down their lives for the sake of the truth they had embraced. The Muslims' migration to Madina was thus carried out in spite of the Quraysh leaders' knowledge of it and in spite of their isolated cruel attempts to prevent it.

III. THE PROPHET'S MIGRATION: (A) THE LAST ATTEMPT TO KILL HIM

As a last resort the Quraysh leaders concentrated their attention on the Prophet, and that for two obvious reasons. In the first place, if they could not control or prevent the migration of the Muslims in general, who were their own men scattered in all the clans and families, they could at least keep an

effective watch against one person and prevent his going. Secondly, they understood full well that the concentration of the Muslims at Madina would pose a threat to the Quraysh if only the Prophet migrated there and joined them. Hence the Quraysh leaders were determined to prevent this from happening.

Ibn Isḥâq gives some details of the Quraysh leaders' manoeuvres in this respect. He says that as they saw that the Muslims had found a secure place of resort for them they realized the gravity of the situation and the imminence of the Prophet's migration to Madina. Hence they decided to meet in a conference at the famous Dâr al-Nadwâ in the vicinity of the Ka'ba to decide on the course of action to be taken with regard to the Prophet. It was to be a close-door and secret meeting in which none but the Quraysh leaders and persons in whom they had complete confidence were to be admitted. Ibn Isḥâq clearly mentions that some non-Quraysh people, obviously those who were in league with the Quraysh leaders, also attended the conference. It is further stated that a *satan* in the from of an old and experienced Najdi *shaykh* also sought and was given permission to attend the conference. This person played a conspicuous role in the proceedings of the conference. Of the Quraysh leaders who were present in the meeting Ibn Isḥâq makes special mention of 'Utbah ibn Rabî'ah, Shaybah ibn Rabî'ah and 'Abû Sufyân ibn Ḥarb representing Banû 'Abd Shams; Ṭu'aymah ibn 'Adiyy, Jubayr ibn Muṭ'im ibn 'Adiyy and Al-Ḥârith ibn 'Âmir representing Banû Nawfal ibn 'Abd Manâf; Al-Naḍr ibn al-Ḥârith of Banû 'Abd al-Dâr; 'Abû al-Bakhtarî ibn Hishâm, Zam'ah ibn al-Aswad ibn al-Muṭṭalib and Ḥakîm ibn Ḥizâm representing Banû Asad ibn 'Abd al-'Uzzâ; 'Abû Jahl of Banû Makhzûm; Nubayh ibn al-Ḥajjâj and Munabbih ibn al-Ḥajjâj, both brothers and of Banû Sahm; and 'Umayyah ibn Khalaf of Banû Jumaḥ.[1]

Several proposals were made and discussed in the conference. One of the leaders proposed to capture the Prophet, tie his hands and feet with iron chains and then to keep him confined without food and drink so that he would die the death of the poets of old like Zuhayr and Nâbighah. This proposal was opposed, mainly by the above mentioned Najdî *shaykh,* who pointed out that no sooner would the Prophet be thus confined than the news of it would escape by the back-door of the house in which he would be confined and then his followers would rescue him from their hands by any means. So this proposal was dropped. A second proposal was that the Prophet should

1. *Ibid.,* 481.

be expelled and driven out of Makka, it mattered not whither he went; for if he left the city it would be relieved of the trouble he had brought on it. This proposal too was vetoed by the Najdî *shaykh*. He pointed out that the proposed measure would be tantamount to courting the same trouble which was sought to be avoided. For the Prophet, with his argumentative and sweet words, and above all with his amiable personality and character, would win over the people of whichever place he went to and would then come with those people against the Makkans. Accordingly this proposal too was set aside. Finally 'Abû Jahl put forward the proposal to do away with the Prophet altogether. He suggested that from each clan a strong and courageous man should be selected and each should be given a razor-sharp sword with which all should strike the Prophet simultaneously, as if the blow of one man, and thus kill him. Thus would the blood-guilt be distributed equally upon all the clans so that it would be impossible for Banû Hâshim to fight with each and every Quraysh clan and they would ultimately be constrained to accept blood-money which would be paid them by the other clans. This proposal was strognly supported by the Najdî *shaykh* and it was adopted by the conference.[1]

The Qur'ân clearly refers to such plans and manoeuvres of the Quraysh leaders in 8:30 which runs as follows:

﴿وإذ يمكر بك الّذين كفروا ليثبتوك أو يقتلوك أو يخرجوك ويمكرون ويمكر اللّه واللّه خير المـٰكرين﴾(٨ : ٣٠) (سورة الأنفال)

"And (remember) when those who disbelieved conspired against you — to keep you in confinement, or to kill you, or to drive you out. They design; and Allah also designs. Verily Allah is the best of designers."(8:30)

Two aspects of the Quraysh leaders' secret conference need a closer look at. The first is the presence of Muṭ'im ibn 'Adiyy's son Jubayr and brother Ṭu'aymah in the conference. This fact shows that the protection given to the Prophet after his return from Ṭa'if some three years previously by Muṭ'im, leader of Banû Nawfal, was no longer operative. Muṭ'im was not yet dead; he died about seven months before the battle of Badr.[2] Most probably due to old age he had allowed his son and brother to step into his position as leader of the clan.[3] In any case, Jubayr ibn Muṭ'im and his clan Banû Nawfal were

1. *Ibid.*, 480-482; Ibn Sa'd, I., 227.

2. Ibn Hishâm, I., 483-484; *Musnad*, I, 348; Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr*, IX, 227-230; Ibn Kathîr, *Tafsîr*, IV, 49.

3. '*Usd a-Ghâbah*, I, 271.

now aligned with the Quraysh opposition and the Prophet was no longer under the protection of Banû Nawfal. Yet he continued to stay at Makka and for at least a couple of years had been in a position to conduct his negotiations with the tribes and the people of Madina. This fact brings us to the second aspect of the proceedings of the secret conference, namely, the anxiety of the leaders, particularly of 'Abû Jahl, to avoid the inevitable vengeance of Banû Hâshim by making the blood-guilt fall equally upon all the clans. Indeed there seems to have been no difference of opinion as to whether the Prophet should be killed or not. The only diffculty to be resolved was how to neutralize the vengeance of Banû Hâshim. This means that at that point of time the latter had not quite abandoned the Prophet. There is no doubt, however, that shortly after 'Abû Ṭâlib's death when 'Abû Lahab had emerged as the leader of the clan they had forsaken the Prophet so that he was obliged to seek support and protection at Ṭâ'if. It would thus appear that the respite afforded by Muṭ'im ibn 'Adiyy's protection enabled the other members of Banû Hâshim who were favourable to the Prophet like Ḥamzah, 'Al-Abbâs and 'Alî to get over the clan to disapproving 'Abû Lahab's policy and to reasserting their protection for the Prophet. In fact such resumption of Banû Hâshim's responsibility explains the end of Muṭ'im ibn 'Adiyy's protection which was either withdrawn or surrendered on the basis of a mutual understanding. For the spirit of gratitude with which the Prophet subsequently remembered Muṭ'im's help does not admit of any assumption of bad faith on his part. Banû Hâshim's resumption of their duty to protect the Prophet explains not only the end of Muṭ'im's protection, it also explains the Prophet's continued stay at Makka till his migrations, Al-Abbâs ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's accompanying him in his visits to the camps of some of the tribes seeking their support, particularly his presence at the Second Pledge of 'Aqabah and, above all, the failure of the Quraysh leaders to do away with the Prophet openly though there was no dearth of eagerness on their part to kill him.

(B) "VERILY ALLAH IS WITH US"

On his part the Prophet, on the departure of most of his companions for Madina, had been waiting for Allah's definite directive for him to migrate; while 'Abû Bakr, seeing that the Quraysh leaders' opposition and pressure

2. It was Muṭ'im's son Jubayr who pleaded with the Prophet for the Badr prisoners when he made his remark that if Muṭ'im were alive and asked for the release of the prisoners they would have been released for nothing.

upon him were increasing daily, sought the Prophet's permission for him to migrate. The Prophet asked him to wait, adding that Allah might arrange for a good companion for him.[1] The clear indication was that the Prophet liked to have him as his companion in the migration. Yet, to be sure, 'Abû Bakr enquired of the Prophet whether he expected Allah's permission for him too to migrate. He replied that he did. Therefore 'Abû Bakr waited. In fact he had been preparing himself for the migration even since before the conclusion of the Second 'Aqabah Pledge; for it is on record that he had been specially feeding and maintaining two good camels for the purpose for at least four months prior to his migration with the Prophet early in Rabî' I of the 14th year of the mission.[2]

As soon as the Quraysh leaders hatched their conspiracy to kill the Prophet he was informed of it by Allah. Indeed an allusion to this fact is contained in the last clause of *'âyah* 8:30 which states: "And Allah is the best of designers". The plain meaning of this statement is that Allah knew best how to deal with the conspiracy of the evil ones, that He was keeping a watch on their manoeuvres and that it was His plans, not their conspiracy, that were to prevail. It is reported that no sooner had the Quraysh leaders dispersed from their secret conference than Jibrîl came to the Prophet and informed him of their proceedings and asked him not to sleep that night in his own bed.[3] Jibrîl also communicated to the Prophet Allah's permission for him to migrate. According to Ibn 'Abbâs this divine permission for the Prophet to migrate is contained in 17:80.[4]

The remaining few hours were understandably the time for finalizing the plans and preparations that the Prophet and 'Abû Bakr had naturally been making for sometime in expectation of the permission for migrating. The details are not on record but the accounts of the actual process of the migration as given by 'Abû Bakr, 'Â'ishah and Surâqah ibn Ju'shum (r.a.), all directly involved in the process, enable us to identify the main aspects of the plans and preparations made in this respect. These are: (a) 'Abû Bakr's specially feeding and maintaining two good camels for the purpose for at least four months prior to the date of the migration; (b) an agreement with 'Abd Allah ibn Urayqiṭ of Banû al-Du'il ibn Bakr who, notwithstanding his being

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 480; *Bukhârî*, nos. 3905, 4068.
2. *Ibid.*, also *Bukhârî*, no. 2138.
3. Ibn Hishâm, I, 482; Ibn Sa'd, I, 227.
4. *Mustadrak*, III, 3; *Musnad*, I, 223. The text is:

﴿وقل رَّب أدخلنى مدخل صدق وأخرجنى مخرج صدق واجعل لّى من لّدنك سلطـٰنا نّصيرا﴾

an unbeliever and in friendly relations with Banû Sahm, was a man of trust and who undertook, for some consideration given to him, to take charge of the two animals on the eve of the migration, to bring them to the Prophet and 'Abû Bakr at the appointed place and hour, to act as guide for them through the unchartered and infrequented part of the way to Madina which the Prophet planned to take and which, obviously, was not known to him nor to 'Abû Bakr and, above all, to keep all these arrangements a complete secret; (c) the selection of the cave of Thawr, a few miles to the south-west of Makka and therefore not in the direction of Madina to which all searching eyes would naturally and immediately turn, as the place where to hide themselves till the heat of the Quraysh's anger and pursuit was over; and (d) the instructions given to 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abû Bakr and 'Âmir ibn Fuhayrah, the first to stay at Makka during day-time to keep a track on the Quraysh leaders' deeds and words and report them to his father and the Prophet at dead of night; and the second, 'Âmir, to shepherd 'Abû Bakr's goats during daytime in the vicinity of the cave, thus obliterating the traces of the Prophet's and 'Abû Bakr's foot-steps to the hill on the one hand, and to supply them with milk from the goat at night on the other, and then to return to Makka — both to perform their duties in such a way as would not excite the other Makkans' suspicion or inquisitiveness about their movements. Needless to say, such plans and preparations could not have been completed on the spur of the moment or within a few hours. They were doubtless thought out and settled well in time, though they were finalized shortly before departure from Makka. It may also be supposed that 'Abd Allah ibn Urayqiṭ was not told about the cave to begin with but was subsequently informed through 'Abd Allah ibn Abû Bakr where and when he (Urayqiṭ) was to be present with the animals ready to set out for the journey. For Ibn Isḥâq very emphatically states that none knew about the Prophet's departure for the cave except 'Abû Bakr, his family and 'Alî.[1]

The Quraysh leaders also acted according to their plans; but with the disadvantage that they did not know that their schemes were known to the Prophet. According to their plans their select band of assassins lay in wait at night outside the Prophet's house, ready to strike at him.[2] Ibn Sa'd, on the authortty of Al-Wâqidî and his chain of narrators, gives the names of the assassins who thus waited in ambush for the Prophet. There were 12 per-

1. Ibn Hisham, I, 485.
2. *Ibid.*, 483; Ibn Sa'd, I, 228.

sons, namely, 'Abû Jahl, Al-Ḥakam ibn 'Abî al-'Âṣ, 'Uqbah ibn 'Abi Mu'ayṭ, Al-Naḍr ibn al-Ḥârith,'Umayyah ibn Khalaf, Ibn al-Ghayṭalah, Zam'ah ibn al-Aswad, Ṭu'aymah ibn 'Adiyy, 'Abû Lahab, 'Ubayy ibn Khalaf, Nubayh ibn al-Ḥajjâj and his broter Munabbih ibn al-Ḥajjâj.[1] It is further stated that they intended to enter the Prophet's house and strike at him but they could not decide who should be the first to enter and strike at him.[2] Hence they waited outside for the Prophet to come out early in the morning.

The Prophet also acted strictly in accordance with the advice given him by Jibrîl. He instructed 'Alî to sleep in his (the Prophet's) bed, covering himself with the Ḥadramauti blanket which the Prophet used to sleep in, so that anyone peeping into the house would suppose that the Prophet was sleeping there. 'Alî was also advised to pay up to their respective owners, when the Prophet was away, whatever of their properties and belongings they had deposited with him.[3] For, in spite of all that had happened the people of Makka in general still regarded him as the trusted one and used to deposit their valuables with him for safe custody. Thus making all the necessary arrangements the Prophet gave the assassins a slip.

Exactly when and how the Prophet left his house is differently reported, which is perhaps indicative of the perfect secrecy with which he made his departure from Makka. So far as the report of 'Abû Bakr which has come down to us is concerned, it traces the story only from the point of their departure from the cave of Thawr.[4] The next most authentic report, that of 'Â'ishah (r.a.), speaks of the Prophet's going to 'Abû Bakr's house at the unusual hour of mid-day, disclosing to the latter of Allah's permission for him (the Prophet) to migrate and of other matters including their departure for the cave of Thawr, without specifically mentioning whether the Prophet returned to his house after having spoken to 'Abû Bakr or remained at the latter's house till night. It is clear from her account, however, that they both betook themselves to the cave of Thawr on the night following that very day.[5] A third report, given by Al-Wâqidî on the basis of his chain of nar-

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.;* also Ibn Hishâm, I, 485. Suhaylî, on the other hand, states (III, 229) on the authority of "some commentatotrs" whom he does not specify that the assassins attempted to scale the wall of the house but the shriek of a frightened lady in the house desisted them from so doing.
4. *Bukhârî,* nos. 3615, 3652. See also below (text).
5. *Bukhârî,* no. 3905.

rators, states very distinctly that the Prophet stayed at 'Abû Bakr's house till night when they both went to the cave, adding that this happened when there remained only three more nights to go of the month of Ṣafar.[1] A fourth report, given by Ibn Isḥâq and reiterated by Al-Ṭabarî, but neither mentioning the *isnâd,* states that when the Prophet decided upon migrating he went to 'Abû Bakr's house and from the backdoor of the latter's house they both left for the cave of Thawr.[2] A fifth report, also without proper *isnâd,* quotes the Prophet's maid servant Maria as saying that she bent down for the Prophet to step on her and thus scale the wall on the night he escaped from the unbelievers.[3]

Running counter to the five above mentioned reports are two reports. One, attributed to Ibn 'Abbâs, says that on that night 'Abû Bakr came to the Prophet's house but only found 'Alî there who informed him that the Prophet had already left the house for Bi'r Maymûn whither 'Abû Bakr should go and join him. Thereupon 'Abû Bakr went there, met the Prophet and then they both went to the cave of Thawr.[4] The other report is that of Muḥammad ibn Ka'b al-Quraẓî which is reproduced by Ibn Isḥâq[5] and, with a different chain of narrators, by Al-Wâqidî.[6] It says that on the arrival of the assassins at the gate of the Prophet's house, their leader 'Abû Jahl started shouting abuses to him, ridiculing particularly his teachings about resurrection, the day of judgement, rewards and punishments. At this the Prophet came out of the house, answered 'Abû Jahl's abuses, adding that he ('Abû Jahl) was himself one who would be punished by Allah. The Prophet then took a handful of dust, recited the first few *'âyahs* of *sûrat Yâ-Sîn* (no. 36) and threw the dust on the assassins' heads wherefore they were blinded temporarily and the Prophet then left his house unobserved. After sometime another person who had seen the Prophet going out came to the assassins and informed them that their target had already left the house. Yet, peeping at the bed where 'Alî was sleeping, they persuaded themselves that the Prophet was inside the house and that their informant had lied to them. So they waited there till

1. Ibn Sa'd, I, 228. Also quoted in Ibn al-Jawzî, *Al-Wafâ' etc.,* p. 238.
2. Ibn Hishâm, I, 485; Al-Ṭabarî, *Târîkh,* II, 378 (I/1239).
3. *Al-Istî'âb,* no. 7269; *Al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dîl,* 2/2/36-37.
4. *Musnad,* I, 331. The same report given in *Al-Musdakrak,* III, 4, does not contain the above piece of information.
5. Ibn Hishâm, I, 483.
6. Ibn Sa'd, I, 228.

morning when, finding only 'Alî in the house, they realized that their informant was right.

This repoprt, besides being *mursal* in that Muḥammad ibn Ka'ab al-Quraẓî was a *tâbi'î* born some forty years after the migration and he does not mention the source of his information, raises a number of other questions that seriously impair its credibility. The instruction given to the Prophet by Jibrîl not to sleep in his bed that night meant not simply that he (the Prophet) should only put another person in his own bed and then wait in the house to see what happened and then make his escape, if necessary. The clear implication of the instruction was that the conspirators were very likely to enter his house and seek him out there and that therefore he should stay away from his usual place. Indeed the very fact that Allah informed the Prophet about the conspiracy of his enemies as soon as it was hatched meant that he should take all possible precaution to avoid and baffle their attack. As against such instructions the Prophet could not reasonably have taken any chance of remaining within the easy range of his enemies, the more so because the instructions clearly indicated the possibility of the assassins' attacking him in his own house. Secondly, 'Abû Jahl and his fellow conspirators clearly planned to accomplish their design surreptitiously and suddenly, taking the Prophet and his clansmen unawares. Hence it was as unlikely on 'Abû Jahl's part to start shouting and abusing the Prophet on reaching his door as it was unexpected of the Prophet to come out of the house and face the enemies, notwithstanding his having been advised not even to stay in his bed that night! Such a conduct on his part is also contrary to the careful plans and preparations he by all accounts had made for the migration. If it is assumed, on the other hand, that the purpose of 'Abû Jahl's allegedly abusing the Prophet was to incite him into coming out of his house, then that would be all the more reason why he should not have done so. Moreover, the question would then arise: why should then 'Abû Jahl and his men have given the Prophet the time to contradict the abuses, to pick up the dust, to utter the *'âyahs* etc., instead of immediately rushing at him and attacking him, as they had planned to do?

As regards the other report which says that 'Abû Bakr came that night to the Prophet's house only to find that he had already left his house, it betrays a lack of coordination between the two which is inconsistent with 'Â'ishah's (r.a.) report and also with the fact of their previous consultations and plans. It is also inconsistent with the fact of the conspirators' keeping a watch out-

side the house. 'Abû Bakr could not have simply come to and gone out of the house without being intercepted, if not attacked, by them. If he had come early in the night before they surrounded the house he would have found the Prophet there; for he would not have left too early if he had at all asked 'Abû Bakr to come to his house. If, on the other hand, the Prophet had left his house well before the enemies were likely to surround his house he would have headed straight to 'Abû Bakr's house or to the place agreed on between them. At all events the report is essentailly inconsistent with the fact of previous consultations and plans made by the Prophet and 'Abû Bakr.[1]

On these considerations it may be stated on the basis of the five first mentioned reports, particularly the report of 'Â'ishah (r.a.) that, even if the Prophet had returned to his house after finalizing the plans with 'Abû Bakr, he left his house well in time before the enemies surrounded it. He then joined 'Abû Bakr in his house and then the two left together for the cave at dead of night from the latter's house by its backdoor, apprehending quite reasonably that the enemies could even keep a watch on the normal exit from 'Abû Bakr's house.

Let us now have a look at 'Â'ishah's (r.a.) report on the subject. She states that one day at noon she and her sister 'Asmâ' were with their father 'Abû Bakr at home when someone drew his attention to the Prophet who was coming to them with his face covered (most probably as protection against the heat of the mid-day sun). She adds that normally the Prophet used to come to their house either in the morning or in the evening-time; but never at that hour of the noon. Seeing him indeed coming 'Abû Bakr remarked that there must have been something serious which had brought him there at that odd hour. On coming to the spot the Prophet sought permission to enter the house. As he was welcomed into the house he asked 'Abû Bakr to be alone with him. 'Abû Bakr told the Prophet that those who were there were but his own family members.[2] The Prophet then disclosed that he had received Allah's permission and instructions to migrate. 'Abû Bakr eagerly enquired whether he could accompany him. As the Prophet

1. Sulaymân Ḥamd al-'Awda attempts to reconcile this report with the report of 'Â'ishah (r.a.) by suggesting that the Prophet had returned to his house after having consultations with 'Abû Bakr (*Al-Sîrat al-Nabawiyyah fî al-Saḥîḥayn wa 'inda Ibn Isḥâq,* etc,. unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Imam Muḥammad University, 1407/1987, p. 403). This explanation, however, ignores the inherent inconsistency of the report with the fact of their careful plans.

2. At that time 'Â'ishah (r.a.) had already been married to the Prophet.

replied in the affirmative 'Abû Bakr's joy knew no bounds.[1] He then asked the Prophet to accept one of the two camels he ('Abû Bakr) had been specially maintaining for the expected journey. The Prophet agreed to do so on condition of 'Abû Bakr's accepting the price for the animal. 'Â'ishah then says that she and her sister 'Asmâ' hurriedly arranged some food for their taking with them and that her sister, finding nothing to tie the food with, tore her belt into two and therewith fastened the foodstuff for them. For that reason, adds 'Â'ishah, 'Asmâ' came subsequently to be called *Dhât al-Niṭâqayn* (owner of two belts).[2]

'Â'ishah does not give further details and says immediately after this that the Prophet and 'Abû Bakr went to the cave of Thawr where they remained for three nights. Her brother, 'Abd Allah, who was a very clever youth with sharp intelligence, used to stay with them in the cave at night, leaving it very early in the morning and returning to Makka well in time to make it appear that he had passed the night there. During the day he collected as much information as possible about the Quraysh leaders' talks and plans against the Prophet and at night he reported everything to the Prophet and 'Abû Bakr. On the other hand 'Abû Bakr's servant 'Âmir ibn Fuhayrah used to take 'Abû Bakr's flock of goats to graze near the Thawr hill and when darkness engulfed the region to take the goats up to the cave, to milk some of them and give the milk to the Prophet and 'Abû Bakr to drink it. 'Âmir in his turn used to return to Makka with the goats at night and then again to go with the goats in the morning to graze near the Thawr hill till night. Thus did 'Abd Allah and 'Âmir alternately take care of the Prophet and 'Abû Bakr during night and day. 'Â'ishah further says that the Prophet and 'Abû Bakr had hired an experienced guide of Banû al-Di'l, of the tribe of 'Abd ibn 'Adiyy (i.e. 'Abd Allah ibn 'Urayqiṭ), who undertook to look after the two camels during the Prophet's and 'Abû Bakr's stay in the cave and then to be present at the spot with the two animals and his own ride at a specified time. He did so according to the instructions given to him.[3]

On their part the Quraysh conspirators, when they found out that the Prophet had given them a slip, they first caught hold of 'Alî and questioned

1. Another version of the report says that Abû Bakr wept out of joy.

2. *Bukhârî*, nos. 3905. See also nos. 2979, 3907 and 5388.

3. *Bukhârî*, no. 3905. More or less the same facts are related, on 'Â'ishah's authority, by Ibn Isḥâq (Ibn Hishâm, I., 484-487), Ibn Sa'd (I, 229) and others.

him about the Prophet. He did not, however, divulge to them any clue to the Prophet's whereabout. Hence they hurried to 'Abû Bakr's house and questioned 'Asmâ' where her father was. As she pleaded her innocence of his whereabouts 'Abû Jahl slapped her so forcefully that her ear-ring fell away.[1] Indeed the conspirators' anger was as high as was their disappointment, the more so because they had laboured under the mistaken impression that their conspiracy was quite unknown to the Prophet so they would take him unawares.

Being unable to obtain any information about the Prophet from either 'Alî or 'Asmâ' the Quraysh leaders sent their armed youths in all directions in search of the Prophet and his companion. They specially tracked down all the exits from the town as far as they thought the Prophet might have travelled within the night. They also employed experts in foot-print to trace the direction of their escape. According to Al-Wâqidî a person named Kurz ibn 'Alqama was one such expert employed for the purpose by the Quraysh leaders.[2] One of the Quraysh search parties did indeed go upto the mouth of the Thawr cave. Miraculously enough, though they were so near its mouth that its inmates could see their feet from inside the cave, they did neither enter it nor peep into it. Speaking about that critical moment 'Abû Bakr states that he looked upwards and saw the feet of some Quraysh people. In an understandable mood of panic he said to the Prophet: "O Messenger of Allah, if any of them should look downward he would see us". The Prophet said to him: "Keep quiet. We the two, Allah is the third with us."[3] The Qur'ân specifically refers to this incident at 9:40 as follows:

﴿ .. فقد نصره الله إذ أخرجه الّذين كفروا ثانى اثنين إذ هما فى الغار إذ يقول لصـٰحبه لا تحزن إنّ الله معنا فأنزل الله سكينته عليه... ﴾ (٩ : التوبة ٤٠)

"...Then Allah indeed helped him when the disbelievers had driven him out, he being one of two when the two were in the cave and when he said to his companion; 'Grieve not, verily Allah is with us'. So Allah sent down His tranquility on him..." (9:40)

Some reports speak of various miracles like the growth of a tree at the

1. Ibn Hishâm, I, 487. 'Asmâ' was at the time pregnant for about four months; for her son 'Abd Allah was born almost immediately on her migration to Madina some six months subsequently. (*Bukhârî,* nos. 3909, 3910).

2. Cited by Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ al-Bârî,* VII, 279; *Al-'Iṣâbah,* III, 291.

3. *Bukhârî,* nos. 3922, 4663; *Muslim,* no. 2381; *Musnad,* I, 4.

mouth of the cave wherein two doves rested in their nests;[1] or of a spider and its web covering the entrance of the cave so that the unbelievers, seeing these, concluded that none had lately entered it and they thus retraced their steps without looking into it.[2] The degree of authenticity of these particular reports is open to question;[3] but the essence of all such reports is that it was indeed a miracle caused by Allah and His unseen help that turned away the unbelievers from the Prophet and his companion and saved them from being detected and captured although they were under the very nose of their pursuers.

IV. ONE HUNDRED CAMELS FOR THE HEAD OF EACH

The Prophet and 'Abû Bakr remained in the cave for three nights after which 'Abd Allah ibn Urayqiṭ, according the agreement, arrived there at the appointed time with the two camels and his own ride. 'Âmir ibn Fuhayrah also came ready to travel. The party of four then started from the cave, taking their route towards the coast.

Abû Bakr states that they started at night,[4] travelled at a stretch for the whole night and till noon on the following day. The heat of the sun and the desert growing intolerably intense he was looking for a suitable spot to take rest therein when a high rock appeared before his eyes at a distance. On approaching it he found that its shade was quite suitable for their taking rest therein. He cleared the spot and made a bed with a piece of fur which he had with him and then asked the Prophet to sleep on it, he himself keeping a watch over him and all around. Presently he noticed a shepherd with his flock of goats coming towards the spot for the same purpose of taking shelter in the shade. 'Abû Bakr asked the shepherd about his identity and came to know that he was in the employ of an inhabitant of Makka whom he ('Abû Bakr) knew. He then asked the shepherd whether there was milk in

1. Ibn Sa'd, I, 229.

2. *Musnad.* I, 348.

3. See for instance, Aḥmad Shâkir (ed.), *Al-Musnad,* V, 87, note to *hadîth* no. 3251; *Mîzân al-I'tidâl,* III, 306; Al-Ghazâlî, *Fiqh al-Sîrah,* 173, n. 2 (comments of Al-Albânî).

4. *Bukhârî,* no. 3917; Muslim, no. 3009. Cf. *Bukhârî* no. 3905 wherein 'Â'ishah (r.a.) says that 'Abd Allah ibn Urayqiṭ came to the cave in the "morning" (صباحا) on the expiry of three nights. Their starting from the cave at night is more likely because it was the more suitable time for travelling and for avoiding notice by others. Ibn Ḥajar does not offer any explanation for this apparent discrepancy between the two statements. These can be easily reconciled, and very reasonably too, by assuming that the guide came to the cave at dead of night and they started just after midnight.

the goats with him. He replied in the affirmative. Hence 'Abû Bakr requested him to milk a goat and give them some milk. The shepherd complied with the request. 'Abû Bakr offered the milk to the Prophet when he woke up and he drank it to his satisfaction. 'Abû Bakr adds that he was very happy at this. After taking rest for sometime and when the sun declined they resumed their journey through the desert.[1]

In the meantime the Quraysh leaders, having failed in their immediate attempts to detect and capture the Prophet and his companion had declared a price on the head of each to the effect that anyone who would capture and bring to them the two persons, dead or alive, would be rewarded with one hundred camels for each. Not only this, the Quraysh leaders sent their emissaries specially to the tribes lying on the way to Madina, as far as possible, to inform them of this declaration, thus setting the greyhounds of the nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes against the Prophet and 'Abû Bakr. One such dangerous and desperate character, Surâqah ibn Mâlik ibn Ju'shum, who thus attempted to haunt the Prophet and his companion for the purpose of obtaining the prize himself narrates the story which, supplemented by Abû Bakr's statements, is as follows:

Surâqah states that the emissaries of Quraysh came to his tribe, Banû al-Mudlij (living near Qudayd) and informed them that anyone who would either kill or capture the Prophet and 'Abû Bakr would get a reward of one hundred camels for each. In such a state of affair he was one day sitting in a gathering of the people of his tribe when a person of that tribe came to the place and informed them that he had just seen a small party going towards the coast, adding that he thought they were Muḥammad (ﷺ) and his companions. Surâqah says that he could instantly realize that those persons were the Prophet and his companions; but, for deluding others and himself alone getting the credit and reward for the deed, he said to the informant that those whom he had seen were not they but such and such persons who had just passed by that place. So saying he remained with the gathering for some time. Then he came to his house, took his lance, bow and arrows, went out by the backdoor of the house, mounted his horse and quickly drove away in search of the Prophet and his party. After some time the latter did indeed appear into his view. He sped up all the more but suddenly his horse stumbled and threw him on the ground. Thinking it to be a discouraging omen he consulted his divining arrow which indicated what he did not like, namely,

1. *Bukhârî*, nos. 3908, 3917, *Muslim*, nos. 2009, 3009.

that he would not be successful in his mission. Yet, disregarding the result of the divination, he continued his journey and came so near them that he could hear the Prophet reciting the Qur'ân. Surâqah says that he noticed that the Prophet was sitting calmly on his camel without looking right, left or backward, whereas 'Abû Bakr was doing so constantly and keeping watch on all directions.[1]

'Abû Bakr says that when he noticed that a pursuer was on their heels he nervously drew the Prophet's attention to it. One version of the report says that 'Abû Bakr even burst into tears, not for his own sake, but for the safety of the Prophet. The Prophet prayed to Allah seeking safety with Him from their pursuer and told 'Abû Bakr not to be disheartened, for Allah was with them.[2]

Instantly, says Surâqah, the two front legs of his horse sank suddenly into the ground and he was jerked away from the horse and fell on the ground. He yelled at the horse to get up. After much effort the horse did pull out his legs from the ground; but a column of dust and smoke rose from the spot high into the sky. He once again consulted his divining arrow and once again it gave the same discouraging result. He then shouted out to the Prophet and 'Abû Bakr, telling them his name and assuring them that he would do them no harm and requested them to stop and listen to him. At this they stopped. Surâqah says that the repeated discouraging signs had fully convinced him that the affair of the Prophet would soon prevail. Therefore on coming to them he informed them all about the Quraysh leaders plans and intentions including their declaration of the reward of 100 camels for anyone who could capture each of them dead or alive. He also urged them to accept the food and provisions he had with him. The Prophet, declined, however, to take anything of that but asked him only to keep their whereabouts a secret and also to prevent or divert others from coming on their track. Surâqah promised to do so and prayed for a warrant of security from the Prophet. He asked Fuhayrah to write one for him, which Fuhayrah did on a piece of bone or skin and gave it to Surâqah. Then the Prophet and his companions resumed their journey and Surâqah returned to his home.[3]

1. *Bukhârî*, no. 3906.

2. *Ibid.*, nos. 3615, 3652, 3908, 3911; *Muslim*, nos. 2009, 3009; *Musnad*, I, 2.

3. *Ibid.;* also *Bukhârî*, nos. 3906, 3908, 3911. Surâqah preserved the warrant with him and presented it to the Prophet after his victory at Ḥunayn and embraced Islam then. — Ibn Hishâm, I, 490.

V. THE LATER PHASE OF THE JOURNEY

With the Surâqah incident over the Prophet's progress towards Madina entered a new phase. They were now about two days journey from Makka, leaving Qudayd behind at a considerable distance. They were therefore now in a zone where the writ of the Quraysh leaders did not so readily run. Also Surâqah proved true to his promise. He states specifically that after his return to his place he met several persons who were out in search of the Prophet and he truned them away by saying that he had exhaustively searched all possible routes as far as possible so that there remained nothing for them to look for.[1] Indeed the Prophet and his party were now in a comparatively safer zone and henceforth they did not meet with any dangerous situation worth mentioning.[2]

The Prophet and his party, from now on, followed more or less the usual route to Madina. Ibn Isḥâq and Ibn Sa'd give the names of places the Prophet passed by in the course of his migration;[3] but it is difficult to determine the exact route on the basis of these statements; for the place-names have changed considerably since then. At any rate, even if the Prophet and his party followed alternative tracks, they seem to have reverted at times to the main and usual route, either for taking rest at suitable spots or for making short-cuts. This is indicated by three pieces of information that have come down to us. These are (a) their taking rest at the camp of 'Umm Ma'bad which was on the main route and which was a sort of rest-house for travellers; (b) 'Abû Bakr's being recognized by some men whom he knew previously and who enquired about the Prophet and (c) their meeting on the way a party of Muslim merchants returning from Syria among whom there was Al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm, 'Abû Bakr's son-in-law (husband of 'Asmâ').

The story of 'Umm Ma'bad ('Âtikah bint Khâlid) is interesting. She belonged to Banû Khuzâ'ah and was a public-spirited lady who used to con-

1. *Bukhârî,* no. 3615; *Muslim,* no. 3009.

2. There is of course the report which says that Buraydah ibn al-Ḥaṣîb of Banû Aslam, with seventy or eighty men of his tribe, went out in search of the Prophet to capture him and met him at a place called al-Ghamîm, but being impressed by his personality and words embraced Islam along with all his companions. (Ibn Sa'd, IV, 242; Ibn al-Jawzî, *Al-Wafâ',* 248). The report itself, however does not state that when he met the Prophet, Buraydah showed any hostile attitude to him.

3. Ibn Hishâm, I, 491; Ibn Sa'd, I, 232-233.

duct business in her camp and provide food and drink to the travellers. On arrival at her camp the Prophet sought to buy meat and dates from her but she had none in stock at the time. The report mentions that the locality was passing through a time of scarcity of food and other provisions. Her husband was away grazing their flock of goats. The Prophet looked around the camp and noticed a goat in one corner. He asked 'Umm Ma'bad why the goat was there. She replied that it was too weak to be taken out to grazing. The Prophet enquired whether there was milk in the goat. She said that it was too weak to have milk. Yet the Prophet asked whether she would allow him to milk the goat. She said that she had no objection to his doing so, if he could find any milk in it. The Prophet then prayed to Allah and touched the goat's udder which, miraculously enough, instantly swelled up with milk. He then took a pot and milked the goat. Everyone of the party and 'Umm Ma'bad herself drank the milk to their satisfaction, the Prophet drinking last of all. He then milked the goat again and left a potful of milk for her and her husband.[1] The Prophet and his party then left the place. According to one version of the report 'Umm Ma'bad embraced Islam at the hand of the Prophet before his departure;[2] while another version says that she subsequently migrated to the Prophet and then embraced Islam.[3] Shortly after the Prophet's departure from the place 'Umm Ma'bad's husband, 'Abû Ma'bad, returned to the camp and was exceedingly surprised to see the milk. 'Umm Ma'bad narrated to him the whole story and also gave a very graphic description of the Prophet's appearance and personality. Her husband exclaimed that her visitor was none else than the man of Quraysh about whose affair so much had been heard. He also expressed his ardent wish that if he had had the chance to do so he would certainly have accompanied the Prophet.

At some place in the course of their journey the Prophet and his party came across some people who knew 'Abû Bakr on account of his previous travels to Syria. They did not however know the Prophet. Therefore they asked 'Abû Bakr who his companion was. 'Abû Bakr did not like to disclose the Prophet's identity for reasons of security. Accordingly he cleverly replied that the person was his "guide" by which they understood him to be the

1. Ibn Sa'd, I, 230-232; *Al-Mustadrak,* III, 9-10; Abû Nu'aym, *Dalâ'il,* 337-343; Ibn al-Jawzî, *al-Wafâ',* 244-247; etc.

2. *Al-Mustadrak,* III, 10.

3. Ibn Sa'd, I, 232.

guide of the way while 'Abû Bakr meant by the expresion his guide to the truth.[1] At another stage of their travel the Prophet's party met a group of Muslim merchants returning from Syria. Among them was Al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm. He presented the Prophet and 'Abû Bakr with pieces of white cloths brought from Syria which they had on them when they approached Madina.[2]

Thus travelling for ten to twelve days the Prophet and his companions arrived at the vicinity of Madina. There the *'anṣar* and the *muhajirs*, having come to know of the Prophet's exit from Makka, had been eagerly awaiting his arrival any day. Each morning they used to go out to the open stony ground at the side of Qubâ' and wait there till the heat of the noon sun obliged them to retire and come home. One day, when they had just returned from their long wait in the open they heard the shouting of a Jew. The latter had noticed from the high roof of his buliding a small party of travellers appearing at a distance in the desert and advancing towards the town. He instantly recognized that they were the Prophet and his party. He therefore shouted out to the Muslims telling them that the "good fortune" for which they had been waiting was there in the desert coming to them. Hearing this the Muslims hurriedly equipped themselves with weapons and went out in a body to receive the Prophet. Accompanied by them the latter entered Qubâ' on the outskirt of Madina and took his residence with Banû 'Amr ibn 'Awf.[3] According to most of the authorities the Prophet arrived at Qubâ' on Monday, 12 Rabî' I of the 14th year of his mission (1 H., corresponding to 23 September 622 A.C.). After a few days 'Alî ibn 'Abî Ṭâlib, having faithfully discharged the duty with which he had been entrusted, arrived and joined the Prophet. Subsequently the Prophet's and Abû Bakr's family members arrived and joined them.

With the arrival of the Prophet at Qubâ' the Makkan period of his mission ended and a new era of his life as well as of Islam began.

1. *Bukhârî,* no. 3911; Ibn Sa'd, I, 233-234, 235.

2. *Bukhârî,* no. 3906. See also *Fatḥ al-Bârî,* VII, 286; *al-Mustadrak,* III, 11.

3. *Bukhârî,* no. 3906; Ibn Hishâm, I, 492-492; Ibn Sa'd, I, 233. Both Ibn Isḥâq and Ibn Sa'd state that the Prophet stayed in the residence of Kulthûm ibn Hidm of Banû 'Amr ibn 'Awf.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE ORIENTALISTS ON THE MIGRATION TO MADINA

The orientalists' views on the background and process of migration to Madina may be discussed under five main headings, namely, their views regarding (a) the Prophet's visit to Ṭâ'if; (b) the negotiations with the tribes and with Madina; (c) the reasons for the Madinites' acceptance of Islam and the Prophet; (d) the manoeuvres of the Quraysh and (e) the manner of the migration itself.

I. REGARDING THE VISIT TO ṬÂ'IF

With regard to the visit to Ṭâ'if the orientalists generally accept the main facts mentioned in the sources, namely, that after 'Abû Ṭâlib's death the Prophet's position became untenable at Makka so he sought support at Ṭâ'if, that he approached mainly 'Abd Yâlîl and his brothers, who were the leaders of their people, that they not only rejected him but also incited the townsfolk to hoot the Prophet out of the town, that he rested at the garden of 'Utbah and Shaybah in the outskirts of Ṭâ'if, that their servant 'Addâs was impressed by the Prophet's words and showed him unusual respects, that the Prophet next halted at Nakhlah and Ḥirâ' and that he re-entered Makka under the Protection of Muṭ'im ibn 'Adiyy. Within the framework of these facts, however, the orientalists make a number of suggestions and assumptions. These centre mainly round the causes of the Prophet's going to Ṭâ'if and the considerations that might have weighed in his mind when he approached its people.

Muir says that the Prophet's position at Makka had reached such a stage that "he must either gain ascendency" there, or "abandon his prophetic claims, or else perish in the struggle." Most of his followers were away in Abyssinia and there had lately been no conversions, "none at least of note, since those of Omar and Hamza three or four years before." "Open hostilities", stresses Muir, "nothwithstanding every endeavour to prevent them, might any day precipitate the struggle, and irretrievably ruin his cause."[1] Hence he began to look around for support. Secondly, Muir implies that the Prophet was now sure that divine visitation would soon befall Makka for its rejection of him. "Mecca knew not the day of its visitation;" writes Muir,

1. Muir, *op.cit.,* 104-105.

"and its doom was well nigh sealed."[1] Thirdly, Muir adds that the Prophet might have expected to win over the people of Ṭâ'if who, though connected by "frequent" intermarriage, "were jealous of the Coreish. They had a *Lât* or chief idol, of their own. It might be possible, by appealing to their tribal pride as well as conscience, to enlist them on the side of Islam against the people of Mecca."[2]

By the expression "open hostilities" in the above mentioned statement Muir obviously means the outbreak of armed conflict. Also by saying that such "open hostilities" would "irretrievably ruin his cause" Muir clearly means that the Prophet was not in a position to start such hostilities and that it was from the side of the Quraysh leaders that such armed attack was apprehended; though a little later on Muir endeavours to uphold the supposed pacific intentions of the Quraysh leaders.[3] In so far as he means to say that the Prophet's position at Makka had become untenable, it is in essence correct.

His other two suggestions, namely, that the Prophet might have imagined an imminence of divine visitation befalling Makka and that he might have intended to take advantage of the supposed jealousy of the inhabitants of Ṭâ'if against the people of Makka, they both are untenable and unjustifiable assumptions. The Qur'ân, and therefore the Prophet of course repeatedly reminded the unbelieving Quraysh of the fate of the persistently unbelieving people of the past, with the implication that such might be their fate too if they persisted in their wrong course; but there is nothing in the Qur'ân nor in the traditions to suggest that the Prophet, either on the eve of his visit to Ṭâ'if or at any other time apprehended the imminence of divine visitation on Makka. Similarly the assumption that he might have intended to play upon the supposed jealousy of the people of Ṭâ'if is belied by the stark fact that no section of the people of that town showed any interest in or inclination towards the Prophet.[4] Muir's statement: "They had a *Lât,* or chief idol of their own", is somewhat misleading. If he means that they had a rival goddess and therefore a rival priestly class as opposed to those at Makka, it would be rather a reason for their similar opposition to the Prophet as exhi-

1. *Ibid.,* 105.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Infra,* pp. 893-895, 916-919.
4. See also below, text.

bited by the priestly class at Makka, than for their supporting him against the Makkans. After all he did not definitely go to Ṭâ'if to champion the cause of their "chief idol"! Indeed, the total rejection of the Prophet by the people of Ṭâ'if calls more for an explanation of their doing so than for surmising, as Muir does, about their supposed jealousy towards Makka which the Prophet might probably have thought of exploiting to his benefit.

In this respect Margoliouth's treatment of the subject is different in that he pays greater attention to what he supposes to be the causes of the Ṭâ'ifians' rejection of the Prophet. So far as the causes of the Prophet's going there are concerned, Margoliouth disposes of them rather summarily saying: "After Abu Talib's death the Prophet is said to have suffered severe persecution", so he left Makka "with the view of obtaining a footing elsewhere."[1] A little later on he makes a novel suggestion saying: "one of the ruling family at Ta'if had a Kurashite wife, hence as a Kurashite Mohammed could claim the protection of the ruling family".[2] The allusion is to the family of 'Amr ibn 'Umayr whose three sons, 'Abd Yâlîl, Mas'ûd and Ḥabîb were leaders of Ṭâ'if and one of whom had indeed married a lady of Banû Jumaḥ of Makka. That, however, was not the Prophet's primary consideration in approaching that family. Indeed the suggestion is naive; for the Quraysh themselves, including Banû Jumaḥ, were opposed to the Prophet. Hence the fact of his being "a Kurashite" could have been no consideration for him to approach a Ṭâ'ifian family just because they were matrimonial relations of a Quraysh family of Makka. The very fact could be more appropriately cited in explaining the hostile attitude of 'Abd Yalîl brothers towards the Prophet.

Stressing the fact of Ṭâ'if's rejection of the Prophet Margoliouth observes that the Prophet "could not apparently have made a worse choice" of the place to seek support from. And in explaining this rejection by Ṭâ'if Margoliouth makes use virtually of the same facts as are utilized by Muir for explaining the Prophet's motives in going there. Thus, first, Margoliouth says that the town of Ṭâ'if was connected with Makka by so many ties. So the former adopted a similar policy to the Prophet. Secondly, the people of Ṭâ'if "were no less devoted to their goddesses" and "years after they made a tougher fight for their religion than any other Arab town."[3] Thirdly, while

1. Margoliouth, *op.cit.,* 178.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*

Muir says that most of the people of Ṭâ'if had previously heard about the Prophet and his mission and initially regarded him with awe but turned against him when their leaders rejected him,[1] Margoliouth assumes that though Ṭâ'if was not two days' journey from Makka and though many Makkans had property at the former place, the Prophet's mission, even though ten years had elapsed of it, "had not reached the ears of the people of Ṭa'if."[2] Hence they paid little heed to him, hearing him for the first time. Thus do Muir and Margoliouth draw opposite conclusions on the basis of the same facts and the same situation. The former's statement that the people of Ṭâ'if turned against the Prophet at the instance of their leaders is in consonance with the facts and the sources. Margoliouth's assertion, on the other hand, that the people of Ṭâ'if had previously been completely in the dark about the Prophet and his mission is a pure assumption made with a view understandably to belittling the latter.

The emphasis put by Margoliouth on Ṭâ'if's rejection of the Prophet seems to have been lost on Watt, who in his turn, pays his main attention to the causes and motives of the Prophet's going there for support. In doing so Watt adopts and elaborates Muir's views noted above. Thus, after mentioning that the Prophet had done whatever was possible for him to do at Makka and that there had been no notable progress of conversions there since the conversion of 'Umar, Watt echoes Muir's remark about the impending doom of Makka. He says that though the sources speak, as reasons for his seeking support elsewhere, of the "increasingly humiliating treatment" the Prophet received after 'Abû Ṭâlib's death, "the possibility should not be entirely overlooked that he expected some calamity to befall Mecca after its rejection of him, and wanted to remove his followers."[3] It must at once be pointed out that the surmise is unjustified. There is nothing in the sources to suggest that the Prophet went to Ṭâ'if being apprehensive of an imminent downpour of divine wrath on Makka. Nor is there any indication that he planned to remove his followeres to Ṭâ'if.

It is, however, the other hint of Muir's, namely, that the Prophet probably intended to take advantage of the Ṭa'ifians' supposed jealousy against Makka, that Watt mainly works on. He reiterates in this connection his the-

1. Muir, *op.cit.*, 106.
2. Margoliouth, *op.cit.*, 180.
3. Watt, *M. at M.*, 139.

ory that "possibly as a result of the war of Fijâr" Ṭâ'if had to acknowledge the financial supremacy of the Quraysh; that Banû Makhzûm had at least financial dealings with Banû Thaqîf. Watt also refers to the two main political groups at Ṭâ'if, the Banû Mâlik and the 'Aḥlâf. The former, he says, were in intimate relationship with the powerful neighbouring tribe of Hawâzin; and to "counterbalance" this the 'Aḥlâf "sought support from Quraysh". Watt then states: "There must almost certainly have been some point of dissension in local politics of which Muḥammad wanted to take advantage." In approaching 'Abd Yâlîl and his brothers he perhaps "hoped to attract them by the bait of financial deliverance from the clutches of Makhzûm."[1]

As shown earlier,[2] the theory of Ṭâ'if's coming under the financial or commercial control of Makka as a result of the *Fijâr* war is wrong. Also, if Banû Makhzûm had financial dealings with some people at Ṭâ'if, so had a number of Banû Thaqîf financial and commercial dealings with many Makkans. It was essentially a two-way traffic and there was no question of the one side being under any sort of control of the other. Watt himself recognizes that "the relationship was not entirely one-sided" and points out that Al-Akhnas ibn Sharîq of Banû Thaqîf was for sometime leader of Banû Zuhrah of Makka.[3] Not only that; it should be noted that 'Abd Yâlîl and his borthers, the leaders of Ṭâ'if, far from being under "the clutches of Makhzûm", were themselves financiers, according to some reports, to many Makkans including members of Banû Makhzûm itself.[4] The greatest objection to the theory is that if the Prophet intended to take advantage of "some point of dissension in local politics", he would have approached the leaders of Banû Mâlik and not 'Abd Yâlîl and his brothers who belonged to the 'Aḥlâf and who, by Watt's own analysis, were friendly to the Quraysh. Finally, the very fact that no section of the people of Ṭâ'if showed any inclination towards the Prophet negatives the surmise that there was any such local dissensions that might encourage an outsider to attempt to exploit them in his favour. The truth is that the Prophet went to Ṭâ'if because his position had become untenable at Makka and because he thought that the people of

1. *Ibid.*

2. *Supra,* Chapter IX.

3. Watt, *M. at M.,* 139. Watt cites Lammens for this fact. It is, however, clearly mentioned in Ibn Hishâm, I, 282, 315, 360, 381.

4. See Al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr,* III, 107.

that neighbouring town might listen to his message, accept it and offer him protection and help. The remark which Muir makes at the end of his treatment of the event is just to the point. He says: "There is something lofty and heroic in this journey of Mahomet to Tayif; a solitary man, despised and rejected by his own people, going boldly forth in the name of God, like Jonah to Nineveh, and summoning an idolatrous city to repent and support his mission. It sheds a strong light on the intensity of his belief in the divine origin of his calling."[1]

II. REGARDING THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE TRIBES AND WITH MADINA

Regarding the Prophet's negotiations with the tribes and with Madina the orientalists concentrate their attention mainly on the causes of the success of Islam at Madina and its reception of the Prophet. Besides this question, however, they make some incidental remarks relating to the various aspects and events of the period. For convenience of discussion these incidental remarks are dealt with in the present section.

To begin with, Muir, referring to the incidents of *'Isrâ'* and *Mi'râj,* says that after the completion of the first stage of negotiations with Madina the Prophet's thoughts so veered northward that "his musings of the day reappeared in the slumbers of the night" and he dreamt to have been carried away to Jerusalem. Not only that, his "excited spirit conjured up a still more transcendent scene", making him ascend from one heaven to another till "he found himself in the awful presence of his Maker", etc.[2] Now, so far as the dating of the incidents is concerned, Muir's mentioning them at this stage in the Prophet's career is no doubt in accord with the view of most of the Muslim classical scholars. Also, since the incidents are essentially miraculous in nature and belong to the domain of belief, it is understandable if a non-believer in the Prophethood of Muḥammad (ﷺ) and the divine origin of the Qur'ân treats these incidents as "dreams" by the Prophet. But what is not understandable is the causation suggested by Muir. If the successful conclusion of the first round of negotiations with Madina had so excited the Prophet's mind and thoughts towards the north, the supposed dream produced by those "musings" would have made him travel in the first instance to Madina and do wonderful things there, instead of making him go to the far-off Jerusalem and then on to the "awful presence of his Maker". The

1. Muir, *op.cit.,* 109.
2. *Ibid.,* 117.

causation suggested by Muir is as inconvincing as it is purely imaginary. Interestingly enough, he dismisses as later fabrication the tradition which says that the Prophet actually saw in dream that Madina was the place where the Muslims were to migrate.[1]

A second assumption of Muir's is that though the Prophet had long given attention to the politics in the north, particularly the conflict between the Byzantine and the Persian empires, making even a "sagacious augury" in *sûrah* 30 (*al-Rûm*) about the ultimate victory of the Romans, it was only "about this period" i.e., after the conclusion of the First ‘Aqabah Pledge, that his interest in the Roman empire increased and therefore he gained, "either from Christian slaves at Mecca, the neighbouring fairs, or from fragments of the Gospels copied by Waraqa and others some acquaintance with the outlines" of the life of Jesus and treated it "in the ordinary legendary" and fragmentary style in the Qur'ân.[2]

The absurdity of the assumption is best illustrated by the fact that he makes virtually the same conjectures in explaining the origin and beginning of Islam and in saying that the Prophet came up with his claims to prophethood and his doctrines after having borrowed ideas from Christianity and Judaism, etc.[3] Also Muir's dating of *sûrat Maryam* (19) after the Prophet's return from Ṭâ'if[4] is grossly wrong. The *sûrah* was revealed much earlier and, as is well known, it was recited by Ja‘far ibn 'Abî Ṭâlib at the court of the Abyssinian ruler in reply to his query about the Prophet's teachings. In any case, it is manifestly absurd to suppose that the Prophet, after at least ten years of his mission and after having faced so much opposition and criticisms by the unbelievers, thought of obtaining some desultory information about Jesus and his teachings only when he (the Prophet) decided to move to a place nearer the then Christian Syrian border!

A third suggestion of Muir's is that after the First Pledge of 'Aqabah the Prophet, waiting patiently for the coming of the Madinite converts to him in the following *ḥajj* season, relaxed his aggressiveness. "Islam was for the present", says Muir, "no longer to be aggressive. And the Coreish, congratulating themselves that their enemy had tried his worst and now was

1. *Ibid.*, 129, n. 1.
2. *Ibid.*, 118-119.
3. See *supra*, pp. 265-268.
4. Muir, *op.cit.*, 139 ff.

harmless, relaxed their vigilance and opposition." In support of this statement Muir quotes in his own translation the Qur'ânic passage 6:106-108 which, he says, provided for the Prophet the divine authority for relaxing his aggressiveness.[1]

The innuendo in the above statement that Islam, i.e., the Prophet, had been aggressive in his work of propagation before the conclusion of the First 'Aqabah Pledge is as unfounded as is the suggestion that after the latter incident there was a relaxation in that supposed aggressiveness. The continued stay of the Prophet at Makka after his return from Ṭâ'if till the migration to Madina may be explained without assuming a relaxation of the supposed aggressiveness on the one hand and the consequent relaxation of vigilance and opposition on the other. In fact Muir's own statement about the background to the Prophet's visit to Ṭâ'if, namely, the utter untenability of his position at Makka, the virtual stoppage of the progress of Islam there and his being abandoned and ousted by his own people simply made it unnecessary for the Quraysh to wait for any change of policy on his part to induce them to relax their vigilance and opposition, if they did so at all. In fact, there was no relaxation as such of their vigilance and opposition. The Prophet was suffered to stay at Makka because, in their view, he had been reduced to complete helplessness, and because he had been given protection by Muṭ'im ibn 'Adiyy and also because, as pointed out earlier,[2] by the fact that Banû Hâshim had now freed themselves from the policy of 'Abû Lahab and attended to their duty of protecting their kinsman. In any case, the Qur'ânic passage 6:106-108 cited by Muir does in no way mark any remarkable change of policy on the Prophet's part.

Its first *'âyah,* 6:106, instructs the Prophet to follow what had been revealed to him and to "turn aside from the polytheists" ﴿وأعرض عن المشركين﴾. This last expression does not mean a cessation of preaching to the unbelievers; it is an exhortation to disregard their opposition and to forbear their manoeuvres and oppression. Nothing illustrates this sense more clearly than the conjoining of the same expression with the very first command to begin open preaching: ﴿فاصدع بما تؤمر وأعرض عن المشركين﴾ "So preach openly what you are commanded and turn aside from the polytheists."[3] The second *'âyah*

1. *Ibid.,* 120
2. *Supra,* p. 871.
3. Q. 15:94. See also 53:29; 7:199 and 32:30.

of the passage 6:107 points out to the Prophet that he was no overseer (حفيظ) of the unbelievers' acts. This also was no new exhortation. The Prophet's role as mere warner (نذير), giver of good tidings (بشير) and as one not with any compelling authority over anyone was stressed repeatedly in many earlier Qur'ânic passages, which only illustrate the non-overbearing and non-aggressive nature of the Prophet's mission.[1] The third *'âyah* of the passage (6:108) is an exhortation to the Muslims not to revile the others' gods. Probably Muir has mainly this *'âyah* in view. Clearly it relates to the over-enthusiasm of some new converts and therefore relates to a state of affairs obtaining earlier and not commensurate with the Prophet's position after his visit to Ṭâ'if. In any case there was no relaxation in the rejection of the idols as worthless objects undeserving of worship. Significantly enough, the very first *'âyah* of the passage under notice reiterates this uncompromising attitude and states: "Follow what is revealed unto you by your Lord. There is none worthy of worship except He. So ignore (turn aside from) the polytheists." The denunciation of the idols and idolatry is here as emphatic as elsewhere in the Qur'ân. Needless to point out that when the rejection of idolatry and polytheism is so unequivocally asserted, the mere abstinence of some converts from abusing the unbelievers' objects of worship, which is the most that can be made out of the *'âyah,* would hardly be a ground for the Quraysh leaders to relax their vigilance and opposition. The passage in question does in no way mark any substantial change of policy so as to induce the Quraysh leaders to suspend their opposition and enmity.

On his part Margoliouth offers an easy answer to the question of the Prophet's continued stay at Makka after his return from Ṭâ'if. "Since favours are usually granted with conditions attached to them", says Margoliouth, "we are entitled to infer" that the Prophet "was only permitted to enjoy the protection of a Meccan family on condition that he confined his proselytising endeavours to strangers."[2] Clearly Margoliouth is here guided by the fact of the Prophet's negotiations with the tribes and the people of Madina during the period under review. In making the assumption, however, Margoliouth does not explain why, if any such condition was attached to Muṭ'im ibn'Adiyy's granting of protection to the Prophet, it is not mentioned in the report concerning it. Margoliouth also fails to see through the implica-

1. See for instance Q. 11:12; 15:89; 17:105; 22:49; 25:1; 25:56; 29:50; 32:3; 33:45; 34:28; 34:44; 34:46; 35:23-24; 35:42; 38:70; 42:48; 46:9; 48:8; 51:50; 67:26.

2. Margoliouth, *op.cit.,* 181-182.

tions of the supposed bargain. It would mean a virtual and formal abandonment of opposition by the Quraysh leaders, giving the Prophet a free hand to go on converting the surrounding tribes and then to take on the Makkans with a *fait accompli.* The Makkan leaders could not conceivably have been blind to such a suicidal course. Such a change of policy would not also go unnoticed by the tribes. But, in fact, Margoliouth is very much self-contradictory in making the assumption; for just in his previous paragraph he elaborates how, when the Prophet during this period used to approach the tribes at the time of the pilgrimage or fairs, "Abu Jahl" ['Abû Lahab] followed him, "throwing clods at the preacher and warning" them "not to abandon their gods"[1] — a fact which gives a loud lie to the assumption that the Quraysh leaders had given freedom to the Prophet to preach to the tribes. And this fact brings us to the third oversight on Margoliouth's part. The approach to the tribes and strangers was made by the Prophet mainly or almost exclusively during the season of *ḥajj* and the fairs, i.e., during the sacred months when it was the solemn duty of the Arabs to cease hostilities and maintain peace so that everyone was free and safe to move about and generally none needed any protection of anyone. Hence there was no question of the Quraysh leaders' giving the Prophet freedom at that particular time, nor was it really necessary for him to take anyone's protection for that purpose only. Margoliouth's inference, or rather assumption is clearly misconceived, besides being contradictory to the fact he himself mentions.

The assumption of some condition having been attached to Muṭ'im ibn 'Adiyy's standing surety for the Prophet is taken over, however, by Watt, though he does not make any mention of Margoliouth in this connection. "We may suppose", says Watt, "that he [Muṭ'im] laid down certain conditions, though there is no mention of them in the sources."[2] Watt takes care not to hazard any guess about the nature of the supposed conditions. He also attempts to explain the silence of the sources on this point, saying that the "story is repeated in honour of the clan of Nawfal. Later it was passed over lightly, since it was discreditable to Hâshim; it was seemingly omitted by Ibn Isḥâq", but inserted by Ibn Hishâm.[3] The argument is inconvincing. Any condition or conditions, if at all, would have been imposed at the instance of

1. *Ibid.,* 181.
2. Watt, *M. at M.,* 140.
3. *Ibid.*

the Quraysh leaders, as was done by them in the case of Ibn al-Dughunnah's standing surety for 'Abû Bakr.[1] Hence that sort of condition would entail no discredit on Muṭ'im or Banû Nawfal as such. There was no question of suppressing it if, as Watt surmises, the story was "repeated in honour of the clan of Nawfal." Nor is it understandable why, if the story was passed over lightly at a subsequent time because it was "discreditable to Hâshim", the supposed conditions only should have been omitted, and not the fact itself of the granting of protection by a non-Hâshimite. After all, the mention of the condition or conditions would rather have lessened the discredit to Banû Hâshim! The fact is that the story was neither initially "repeated in honour of the clan of Nawfal", nor subsequently passed over lightly to avert discredit on Banû Hâshim. The fact of the Prophet's grateful remembrance of Muṭ'im's help has been reported by may including Ibn Isḥâq.

Besides the above mentioned assumption Watt makes two other statements in connection with the Prophet's negotiations with the tribes and others. He says that the Prophet initially conceived himself to be one sent "solely or primarily to Quraysh" and adds that "there is no way of telling whether prior to the death of 'Abû Ṭâlib he had thought of an expansion of his mission to the Arabs in general." The deterioration of his position after 'Abû Ṭâlib's death, declares Watt, "forced him to look farther afield." Hence during the last three years of his stay at Makka "we hear only of dealings with nomadic tribes and with the citizens of at-Ṭâ'if and Yathrib."[2]

The suggestion is only in line with the view of many an orientalist who often describes the Prophet of Islam as the "Arabian Prophet" and suggests that Islam was originally meant mainly for the Arabs and the neighbouring peoples. Watt here further restricts the suggestion, saying in effect that Muḥammad (ﷺ) was initially a Makkan and subsequently an Arabian Prophet. Such characterization of the scope and nature of the Prophet's mission is both mistaken and misleading. It is contradicted by both the Qur'ân and the known facts of the Makkan period of the Prophet's career.

So far as the Qur'ânic evidence on the point is concerned, reference should be made first to those passages that say in so many words that Allah's retribution does not befall a habitation (*qaryah* قرية) until a warner or

1. *Supra,* pp. 675-676.

2. Watt, *M. at M.,* 138. In fact Watt captions this chapter of his, dealing with the events from the visit to Ṭâ'if to the migration to Madina, "Expanding Horizons".

Prophet has been sent to it,[1] that never was a Prophet sent to a *qaryah* except that its people opposed and ridiculed him[2] and that an Arabic Qur'ân had been sent to the Prophet in order that he might warn therewith "The Mother of Habitations and those around it."[3] There is also a passage which says that the Quraysh used to say that were a Prophet sent to them they would be the better in receiving guidance than any of the peoples; but when a warner did come to them they only increased in disobedience.[4] These are the passages that could at the worst be twisted to suggest that the Prophet's mission was intended for Makka, the "Mother of Habitations." The main purpose of these particular passages is, however, to bring home the truth of Muḥammad's (ﷺ) Prophethood to the Makkan unbelievers. The passages do in no way say that the Prophet was sent to and for the Makkan people only. On the contrary the expression "The Mother of Habitations", together with the clause "and those around it" used in both the relevant passages (42:7 and 6:92) leave no room for doubt that both Makka and the surrounding habitations are within the purview of the passages. In fact the very expression "Mother of Habitations" alone implies that the message delivered to it is also intended for all the habitations of which it is the "Mother" or centre/capital. That this is its implication is very clear from two other significant passages, namely, 25:51 and 28:59. The former passage says:﴿ولو شئنا لبعثنا فى كل قرية نذيرا﴾ "Had it been Our will, We would have sent a warner to every habitation." The other passage states more specifically: ﴿وما كان ربّك مهلك القرىٰ حتى يبعث فى أمّها رسولا....﴾ "And your Lord is not to destroy the habitations (i.e. the whole country) until He had sent to their centre/capital (*'ummihâ*) a Messenger...." Thus the very passages that speak of Makka or Mother of Habitations mean clearly that the message delivered to it was also intended for the habitations/ settlements within the land that recognized Makka as their spiritual as well as material centre. There was thus no question of the Prophet's conceiving his mission at any stage of his career to be meant solely or primarily for the Makkan Quraysh. It may also be noted that the above mentioned passages range from the mid- Makkan to late-Makkan period.

Besides the above there are four other passages that call upon the Prophet

1. Q. 6:131; 15:4; 26:208.
2. Q. 7:82; 27:56; 34:34; 43:23; 47:13; 65:8.
3. Q. 6:92 and 42:7.
4. Q. 35:42.

to warn and instruct a particular people. These say that the revelation has been made easy in his language that he may deliver good news to the God-fearing men and warn a "contumacious people" (قوما لّدًا)[1]; that the revelation is a mercy from his Lord to the Prophet to warn a people to whom no warner before you had come[2] or whose ancestors had not been warned.[3] The general nature of the expression *qawm* (قوم) used in all these four passages suggests that the Arab people rather than the Quraysh only are in view. Once again it must be noted that these passages too do not say that the Prophet was sent only for them. It is further to be noted that they range from the early Makkan to the late Makkan period; and some of them are even earlier than the passages in the first category.

There are, however, a third group of Qur'ânic passages of which many are definitely earlier than the passages of the two above mentioned categories and all of which very distinctly state that the Qur'ânic revelations and their messages are meant for makind and the world as a whole. Some of these significant passages are as follows:

(1) ﴿وما هو إلا ذكر لّلعـٰلمين﴾ (٦٨: ٥٢ القلم)

"And it (the Qur'ânic revelation) is naught but a reminder for all the worlds/nations." (68:52 *sûrat al-Qalam*)

(2) ﴿إن هو إلا ذكر لّلعـٰلمين﴾ (٨١: ٢٧ التكوير)

"It (the Qur'ânic revelation) is naught but a reminder/recital to all the worlds/nations." (81:27 *sûrat al-Takwîr*)

(3) ﴿...وما هى إلا ذكرىٰ للبشر ....نذيرا لّلبشر﴾ (٧٤: ٣١، ٣٦ المدثر)

"....And these (the Qur'ânic revelations) are naught but instructions to mankind..........an admonition to mankind."(74:31,36 *sûrat al-Muddaththir*)

(4) ﴿وما أرسلنـٰك إلا كافّة للنّاس بشيرا ونذيرا...﴾ (٣٤: ٢٨ سبأ)

"We have sent you but for the entire mankind, as a giver of good tidings and as a warner..." (34:28 *sûrat Sabâ'*)

(5) ﴿تبارك الّذى نزّل الفرقان على عبده ليكون للعـٰلمين نذيرا﴾ (٢٥: ١ الفرقان)

"Blessed is He Who sent down the *Furqân* (Qur'ân) on His servant that he (or it)

1. Q. 19:97 =﴿فإنما يسّرنـٰه بلسانك لتبشّر به المتقين وتنذر به قوما لّدًا﴾
2. Q. 28:46 and 32:3. They run respectively as follows:
﴿...ولكن رّحمة من ربّك لتنذر قوما ما أتـٰـهم من نّذير مّن قبلك...﴾
﴿...بل هو الحق من ربّك لتنذر قوما مّا أتـٰـهم من نّذير من قبلك...﴾
1. Q. 36:5-6 = ﴿تنزيل العزيز الرّحيم * لتنذر قوما مّا أنذر ءابآؤهم فهم غـٰفلون﴾

may be a warner to all the worlds/nations."(25:1 *sûrat al-Furqân*)

(6) ﴿وما أرسلنـٰك إلا رحمة للعـٰلمين﴾ (٢١ :١٠٧ الأنبياء)

"We have sent you not but as a mercy for all the worlds/nations." (21:107 *sûrat al-Anbiyâ'*)

(7) ﴿قل يـٰأيها النّاس إني رسول الله إليكم جميعا...﴾ (٧ :١٥٨ الأعراف)

"Say: O mankind, I am Allah's Messenger to you all." (7:158 *sûrat al-'A'râf*)

(8) ﴿...وأوحي إليَّ هذا القرءان لأنذركم به ومن بلغ...﴾ (٦ :١٩ الأنعام)

"And this Qur'ân has been communicated to me that I warn you therewith and those whom it reaches."(6:19 *sûrat al-'An'âm*)

(9) ﴿...كتـٰب أنزلنـٰه إليك لتخرج النّاس من الظّلمـٰت إلى النّور...﴾ (١٤ :١ إبراهيم)

"A Book We have sent down to you that you bring out mankind from the darknesses to the light."(14:1 *sûrat Ibrâhîm*)

(10) ﴿هـٰذا بلـٰغ للنّاس ولينذروا به وليعلموا أنّما هو إلـٰه وٰحد...﴾ (١٤ :٥٢)

"This is a communique for mankind, and in order that they are warned therewith and that they know that He is One God ..." (14:52 *sûrat Ibrahim*)

(11) ﴿إنّا أنزلنا عليك الكتـٰب للنّاس بالحقّ...﴾ (٣٩ :٤١ الزمر)

"Verily We have sent down the Book on you for mankind with the truth ..." (39:41 *surat al-Zumar*)

(12) ﴿... أن أنذر النّاس وبشّر الّذين ءامنوا...﴾ (١٠ :٢ يونس)

"... That you warn mankind and give good tidings to those who believe ..." (10:2 *sûrat Yunus*)

(13) ﴿... ونزّلنا إليك الذّكر لتبين للنّاس ما نزّل إليهم...﴾ (١٦ :٤٤ النحل)

"...And We have sent down unto you the Recital so that you clarify to mankind what is sent down to (for) them ..." (16:44 *sûrat al-Nahl*)

(14) ﴿وقرءانا فرقنـٰه لتقرأه على النّاس على مكث...﴾ (١٧ :١٠٦ الإسراء)

"And a Qur'ân We have portioned it in order that you read it unto mankind at intervals ..." (17:106 *sûrat al-'Isrâ'*)

(15) ﴿قل يـٰأيها النّاس قد جاءكم الحقّ من ربّكم...﴾ (١٠ :١٠٨ يونس)

"Say O mankind, the truth has indeed come to you from your Lord ..." (10:108 *sûrat Yûnus*)

These are only some of the relevant passages. There are indeed many more such passages in the Makki *sûrahs* alone emphasizing the universal nature of the Prophet's mission and stating clearly that the instructions, illus-

trations and instances given in the Qur'ân are meant for mankind (للناس).[1] It should be clear from the above, however, that from the very beginning of his career and throughout the Makkan period (and also subsequently) it was repeatedly declared that the Prophet's mission and the revelations sent down to him were intended for mankind and the world as a whole, and not simply for the the Quraysh or the Arabs only. This was the nature and purpose of the Prophet's mission and Messengership. So far as the operational aspect of the mission was concerned it had necessarily to start at a particular place and among a definite people, as he himself was born at a specific place and was from among a specific people. It is noteworthy that to begin with the Prophet was divinely advised to warn his near and blood relations ﴿وأنذر عشيرتك الأقربين﴾; but no one should or could infer from that fact that he initially considered himself to be a Prophet only to his family and relatives! And as soon as the start was made openly the operational aspect of the mission was extended to include all the inhabitants of Arabia —"The Mother of Habitations and those around it", and also those of the other lands who chanced to come in contact with the Prophet. The emphasis on "The Mother of Habitations" was made because of its importance and central position among all the habitations of the land, and not with a view to specifying and restricting the scope and nature of the mission. Even then, the expression was invariably tagged with "those around it" ﴿ومن حولها﴾, thus clearly indicating the extra-Makkan nature of the operational aspect since the very beginning. Similarly the emphasis on *Arabic* Qur'an was made not for restricting its revlevance to the Arabs, but for stressing the fact that since it is in their own language they should understand and accept it the more easily and readily. For the same purpose of bringing home the truth to them it was pointed out that no Prophet had previously been sent to them or to their ancestors. This statement too was not made to mean that the Prophet was only for a particular race or people. At all events, even restricting our consideration to the operational aspect only there is nothing in the Qur'ân to sustain the assertion that the Prophet originally thought himself to be a Prophet to the Quraysh of Makka only and that it was only after 'Abû Ṭâlib's death when his position at Makka became untenable that he started looking farther afield.

It is also worth noting here that the universality of a movement or message does not lie in its being started or disseminated simultaneously all over

1. See for instance Q. 45:20; 39:27; 30:58; 29:43; 28:43; 24:35; 18:17; 17:89 and 14:44.

the world, but in the universality of its appeal and relevance to similar situations at every place and among every people. That is why the French Revolution (1789-1793 A.C.), though it took place mainly in Paris and not remarkably in any other part of France itself, was nonetheless a European revolution because the destruction of the divine-right and despotic monarchy and the system of privileged classes there foreboded the doom of similar systems everywhere in Europe. When Islam denounced polytheism and idolatry in all their different shades, that message in itself constituted a threat to all sorts of polytheism and its beneficiaries among mankind as a whole. When it denounced and rejected, as it did at a very early stage of its life, the deification of human beings through the concepts of either divine incarnation or divine sonship or daughtership, it posed and poses a threat to such practices and beliefs all over the world.

Apart from the Qur'ânic evidence a number of broad and well known facts of the Prophet's Makkan career belie the assumption that prior to 'Abû Ṭâlib's death he did not think of extending his mission beyond Makka and the Quraysh people. It is well-known that since the beginning of open preaching the Prophet used to preach Islam to the pilgrims and others of the different tribes of all Arabia who visited Makka and the neighbouring sacred spots during the *ḥajj* season. It is also well-known that he used to preach at the various fairs like 'Ukâẓ, Dhû-al-Majâz and Majanna where great numbers of people from all parts of Arabia used to come and remain for specified periods. In fact Ibn Isḥâq very clearly points out that as the first *ḥajj* season approached after the beginning of open preaching by the Prophet, the Quraysh leaders conferred to decide how to counteract the effect of his preachings to the tribes who would visit Makka then. They ultimately decided to dub him as a sorcerer and posted their men at all the approaches and entrances to the city to warn the pilgrims against the Prophet. In so doing they in fact did more than the Prophet himself did to disseminate his news to the tribes. Ibn Isḥâq very aptly says: "The Arabs departed that season with a knowledge of the affair of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, and talk about the Prophet spread all over the Arab lands."[1] Thus from the very beginning the Prophet took special care to preach to the non-Makkan Arab people whenever an opportunity to do so

1. Ibn Hishâm,I, 270-272; Ibn Isḥâq, *Al-Siyar wa al-Maghâzî,* 150-152. See also *supra,* p. 646.

presented itself to him.

Secondly, it is also an acknowledged fact that some leading and influential persons from distant tribes embraced Islam at the Prophet's hands at Makka. It is further on record that some of those distant converts desired to stay with the Prophet at Makka; but he sent them away with the instructions for them to work for spreading Islam among their own respective peoples. These facts clearly indicate that their conversions took place fairly before the Prophet's visit to Ṭâ'if. For, after that event his position became very critical at Makka and he himself continued to live there under the protection of Muṭ'im ibn 'Adiyy. It would be no time for such converts to propose to stay with the Prophet at Makka. Nor was the affair of the Prophet so unknown at the time as to prompt the Quraysh leaders to forewarn their visitors to shun the Prophet, which by all accounts was the reason for the visitors' growing curious about the Prophet and led ultimately to their meeting him and embracing Islam. The most prominent of such converts from distant tribes were Ḍimâd ibn Tha'labah al-Azdî[1] and 'Abû Ḍharr al-Ghifârî.[2] Even the conversion of Ṭufayl ibn 'Amr al-Dawsî took place in all likelihood before the Prophet's visit to Ṭâ'if. For not only did the Quraysh leaders' forewarning to him about the Prophet roused his (Ṭufayl's) curiosity about the latter, he, after his conversion, returned to his tribe, preached Islam among them for some time and again came to the Prophet at Makka and asked him to pray for the success of Islam among the Daws tribe. It may also be noted that Ibn Isḥâq, though he is not quite chronological in his description of the events, narrates the story of Ṭufayl ibn 'Amr's conversion[3] before speaking about 'Abû Ṭâlib's death[4] and the Prophet's visit to Ṭâ'if.[5]

Thirdly, with regard to the Prophet's approach to the tribes seeking their protection the process, as indicated before, seems to have started before 'Abû Ṭâlib's death. In saying that the Prophet did not extend his mission to the Arab tribes before the latter event, Watt seems to have overlooked the fact that while, in the earlier years, the Prophet presented Islam to the tribes and asked them only to embrace it, in the post-'Abû Ṭâlib period he

1. *Al- 'Iṣâbah,* no. 4177 (II/210). See also *supra,* pp.535-536.
2. *Bukhârî,* no. 3523. See also *supra,* 537-538.
3. Ibn Hishâm, I, 382-385.
4. *Ibid.,* 415-418.
5. *Ibid.,* 419-422.

approached the tribes both for their embracing Islam and for their affording him protection and help against the opposition and hostility of the Quraysh leaders. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that contact with Madina was made before 'Abû Ṭâlib's death; for the well-Known incidents of the 'Aws's deputation to the Quraysh leaders seeking their military alliance against the Khazraj, the Prophet's urging Islam on the members of that deputation and the conversion of one of them, Iyâs ibn Mu'âdh, to Islam, all took place before the Bu'âth war. Thus it is only by disregarding facts like these and also the Qur'ânic evidence noted above that one can state: "there is no way of telling whether prior to the death of Abû Ṭâlib he [the Prophet] had thought of an expansion of his mission to the Arabs in general."

The other (third) statement of Watt's in connection with the approaches to the tribes is that he says "the earliest sources" mention only Banû Kindah, Banû Kalb, Banû Ḥanîf and Banû 'Âmir ibn Ṣa'ṣa'ah having been approached by the Prophet. "It is difficult to know", he remarks, "why these tribes and no others are mentioned." He then attempts to find the Prophet's "special reasons for expecting that they might listen to what he had to say." Watt suggests that because with the exception of the first mentioned tribe the other three were "either wholly or partly Christian", this might be the special reason. He however adds that "it is impossible to be certain" about it and concludes by saying: "What we are justified in believing is that at this period Muḥammad began to summon members of nomadic tribes to accept Islam, and that behind this activity there was at least a vague idea of the unity of all Arabs."[1]

By "the earliest sources" Watt acknowledgedly means Ibn Hishâm (Ibn Isḥâq) and Al-Ṭabarî whom he cites in his footnote. He is however mistaken in thus assuming that the earliest sources speak only of these four tribes having been approached by the Prophet. Ibn Sa'd, among others, gives a report of Al-Zuhrî and others which mentions at least 15 tribes whom the Prophet approached. And since the premise that only the four tribes are mentioned in this connection is wrong, the surmise about the special reason for so doing is also wrong, besides being unnecessary. It is also not correct that it was only at "this period" that the Prophet "began to summon members of nomadic tribes to accept Islam." The statement, as indicated above, is clearly prompted by an oversight of the real nature of the Prophet's approaches to

1. Watt, *M. at M.,* 140-141.

the tribes at "this period", which was, besides calling them to Islam, to seek their support and protection against the enmity and opposition of the Quraysh. In fact Watt's whole approach here is somewhat self-contradictory and anomalous. Previously, in connection with the causes and beginning of opposition to the Prophet, he suggests that Muḥammad (ﷺ), in order to counterbalance the opposition of the Quraysh leaders, sought to win over to his side the peoples of Ṭâ'if, Nakhlah and Qudayd by recognizing their respective deities.[1] And now Watt suggests that the deterioration of the Prophet's position at Makka after 'Abû Ṭâlib's death made him look beyond Makka, that at this period he began to summon the members of the nomadic tribes to accept Islam and that behind this activity there lay a "vague idea of the unity of all Arabs." The two suggestions regarding the Prophet's supposed expanding outlook made at the two places are clearly inconsistent. As shown earlier and above, Watt's previous suggestion about the attempted winning over of the peoples of Ṭâ'if, Nakhlah and Qudayd is as wrong as is his later suggestion that it was only after 'Abû Ṭâlib's death that the Prophet started looking beyond Makka. It was not "a vague idea of the unity of all Arabs" which now lurked in the Prophet's mind; rather it is a vague assumption about the Prophet's alleged political motives which prompts the making of such contradictory statements. It is also clearly anomalous to suggest that a person who originally conceived himself to be a prophet and reformer only to a particular locality and its people and who worked under that impression and to that end for long ten years started thinking in terms of reforming and uniting all the peoples of the land beyond his own locality because he had been rejected by that locality and because he had failed to unite its people under him! No sensible reformer or aspirant to leadership would be so inordinately ambitious. Clearly the approach fails to see some important aspects of the Prophet's career and leaves something more to be said and understood about him.

III. ON THE CAUSES OF ISLAM'S SUCCESS AT MADINA

As regards the reasons for the Madinites' favourable response to the Prophet the views of Muir, Margoliouth and Watt differ, one from the other. Muir's main suggestion is that it was the direct and indirect influence of Judaism and Christianity together with the effects of the battle of Bu'âth that prepared the ground for the acceptance of Islam and its Prophet at Madina.

1. *Supra*, p. 721.

Margoliouth, however, does not accord any credit to Christianity and suggests that it was the influence of Judaism and the efficacy of the Jewish God as exhibited in the battle of Bu'âth that led the 'Aws and Khazraj to flock to Muḥammad (ﷺ) who claimed himself to be a Prophet and agent of the Jewish God. Watt, in his trun, attempts to find the material reason for the Madinites' acceptance of Islam and its Prophet. He does not speak of any Judaeo-Christian influence in this connection. The following is a brief analysis of their respective views.

Muir says (a) that the idea of a Messiah was communicated by the Jews to the 'Aws and Khazraj whose mind was thus prepared to recognize in Muḥammad (ﷺ) the coming Prophet; (b) that the "pure theism" and "stern morality of the Old Testament" made them realize the contrast with the errors of heathenism; (c) that Madina was "only half the distance of Makka from the Christian tribes of Syria", so Christianity combined with Judaism "probably wrought a more powerful effect upon the social condition of Madina than upon any other part of the Peninsula"; (d) that the battle of Bu'âth had "weakened and humiliated one of the factions without materially strenthening the other; and the citizens, both Arab and Jewish, lived in uncertainty and suspense; so the wearied factions welcomed "the stranger driven from Mecca"; (e) that the politics of Makka and the affairs of the Prophet and his teachings were fairly known to Madina through yearly visits of pilgrims to Makka and through the Quraysh trade caravans frequently halting at Madina; (f) that "through the marriage of Hâshim with a lady of Madina" the Prophet "himself had the blood of the Beni Khazraj in his veins, and a favourable interest, among that tribe at least, was thus secured"; and (g) that the Jews "were already acquainted with the Prophet as a zealous supporter of their Scriptures."[1] To these factors were superadded the advocacy of actual converts.[2]

That the idea of a coming Prophet or Messiah was communicated by the Jews to the 'Aws and Khazraj and that the two tribes, being exhausted and therefore eager for peace and stability after the devatstating battle of Bu'âth welcomed the Prophet as a neutral leader are very clearly stated in the sources. It is also evident that the politics at Makka and the Prophet's affairs there were known to the Madinites through various channels and that the

1. Muir, *op.cit.,* 112-113.

2. *Ibid.,* 114.

Prophet was distantly related to the Khazraj through Hâshim's marriage with a lady of that tribe (i.e.'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's mother). But neither mere Knowledge of the Prophet and his teachings nor distant relationship seem to have had any mentionable influence upon the 'Aws and the Kahzraj in their embracing Islam and accepting the Prophet as their leader. The Makkans themselves knew about the Prophet and his teachings far more than anyone else and they were more closely related to him by blood and marriage. Yet the vast majority of them, even most of the Prophet's own clan Banû Hâshim, held themselves aloof from Islam. As regards Muir's points about the influence of Judaism and Christianity (b and c), it may be recalled that he says almost the same things in suggesting Judaeo-Christian origin of Islam and of the rise of the Prophet. No wonder that he reiterates the same arguments in connection with the Madinites' acceptance of Islam. It is, however, doubtful whether the influence of Syrian Christianity was any the more profound at Madina because of its being closer to the Syrian border. Rather the Makkan Quraysh leaders were in more direct contact with Syrian Christianity in the course of their frequent trade travels there. In general, however, the nature and extent of Christian influences were similar in Makka and Madina. The inhabitants of the latter place of course lived side by side with the Jewish tribes there. It is therefore quite understandable that the 'Aws and the Khazraj had a more intimate knowledge of the Jews and their religious practices. Yet, not to speak of Christianity, there was no noticeable inclination among the 'Aws and the Khazraj even towards Judaism, though, as at Makka so at Madina, a tendency towards monotheism had manifested itself prior to the rise of Islam and indeed a few persons (*ḥanîfs*) did profess monotheism there at Madina. These believers in monotheism did not embrace either Christianity or Judaism obviously because some fundamental aspects of these systems must have appeared to them to be incompatible with their notions of pure monotheism. In any case, the question that poses itself is: Why, despite all the influences and proximity of Christianity and Judaism the Madinites did not embrace either, particularly Judaism, in spite of the fact that they were more closely in touch with the latter and their Jewish neighbours were acnowledgedly suprior to them both financially and educationally? If the 'Aws and the Khajraz had embraced Judaism in any number there would probably have been no Bu'âth war and no need for finding a neutral leadership in an individual outside the ranks of the two rival tribes. Even if after the Bu'âth war the victorious 'Aws had opted for the

religion of their allies (Banû Qurayẓah) they could combinedly have worked out a stable socio-political mechanism in which the Khazraj would have to acquiesce. But even the 'Aws readily abandoned their allies and joined their age-old rival tribe in welcoming Islam and the Prophet. The mere desire for peace and stability almost immediately after their victory appears to be an inadequate explanation for the conduct of the 'Aws tribe at least. The circumstances indicate that the real cause of the success of Islam at Madina has to be sought in the cause of the failure of Judaism there.

Muir of course suggests a reason for the Madinites' preferring Islam to Judaism. Speaking a little later on about the progress of Islam at Madina following the First 'Aqabah Pledge Muir says that the Jews of the place observed in amazement that the "people whom for generations they had vainly endeavoured to convince of the errors of heathenism" were now of their own accord casting aside their idols and professing belief in one true God. "The secret lay" writes Muir, "in the adaptation of the instrument. Judaism, foreign in its birth, touched no Arab sympathies; Islam, engrafted on the faith and superstition, the customs and the nationality of the Peninsula, found ready access to the heart."[1]

The explanation is anachronistic in two ways. It conceives of a sort of Arab national consciousness on the part of the 'Aws and the Khazraj which did not in fact exist at the time even in its vague form. Muir simply reads back a modern concept into the situation of two hitherto contending tribes who had hardly advanced beyond the level of clan loyalties and tribal concepts. Secondly, if the statement of Islam's being allegedly "engrafted on the faith and superstition, the customs and nationality of the Peninsula" has allusion to such features as the institution of *ḥajj,* the direction of prayer towards the Ka'ba, etc., which are usually but incorrectly regarded by many as the "Arab" features of Islam, it should be noted that these had not as yet been enjoined as the rites and practices of Islam. Even prayers were being offered in the direction of Jerusalem, at least on the eve of the migration to Madina. Therefore it is clearly anachronistic to say that such "Arab" or "national" features of Islam were decisive factors in the Madinites' preferring Islam to Judaism. Muir's anachronism is all the more glaring in view of his own statement that the Jews of Madina themselves viewed "the Prophet as the zealous supporter of their Scriptures." (see g above). In fact the explanation for the

1. *Ibid.,* 115.

rejection of Judaism by the 'Aws and the Khazraj has to be sought elsewhere.

The explanation given by Margoliouth is even more unreasonable. He says that those persons whose attention was first drawn by the words of the Prophet were from the Khazraj tribe who "were fresh from a severe defeat" at the hands of the united forces of the 'Aws and the Jews. As'ad ibn Zurârah, says Margoliouth, was a hater of the Jews. The Khazrajites had heard the Jews speaking "of a Messiah who would one day appear and conquer the world for them." Hence, when those Khazrajites heard the Prophet they hastened to join him in order, as the "native tradition" says, to outwit the Jews. The victory at Bu'âth had also turned the head of the Jews who regarded it "as a direct intervention of their God" in their favour; "and since the gods of the Aus had failed to secure them victory, it prepared their enemies to recognize the transcendent power of the Israelitish God, whose emissary and agent Mohammed claimed ......to be."[1] As regards the 'Aws, who had hitherto been defeated in the civil war at Madina, they had now "won a signal victory by the aid of Allah, the God of the Jews." To these victorious 'Aws the name of Allah was associated with success and "they were not willing that the favour of his [His] assistance should be transferred to those whom they had defeated." Hence they also joined the Prophet along with the Khazraj. Thus, says Margoliouth, the "expedient which had originally been intended for the continuance of the civil war resulted in uniting the parties."[2] He adds that the Jews also were "impolitic and unforeseeing" enough to attest the correctness of the first principles of Islam", namely the unity of God and the resurrection of the dead, and "the fact that prayer was to be directed towards their Temple clenched the matter." They might also have imagined to establish a Jewish throne at Madina through the instrumentality of Muḥammad (ﷺ) as they had done in South Arabia through the conversion of an Arab chieftain. "Hence the soil of Yathrib was thoroughly prepared for Islam."[3]

Apart from the surmises about the Jews' attitude, Margoliouth's main suggestion is that, being defeated by the combined forces of the Jews and the 'Aws, the Khazrajites were convinced of the efficacy of the Israelitish God and since Muḥammad (ﷺ) claimed himself to be a messenger of that God,

1. Margoliouth, *op.cit.*, 196-197.
2. *Ibid.*, 197.
3. *Ibid.*, 197-198.

they joined him to obtain the assistance of that God and to continue the civil war. On the other hand the 'Aws, also realizing that it was the assistance of the Israelitish God which had obtained victory for them in the Bu'âth war, joined the Prophet to prevent the assistance of that God from being "transferred to those whom they had defeated."

Now, it is of course true that Muḥammad (ﷺ) claimed himself to be a Messenger of the same God as that of the Jews, the God of Abraham and Moses. But Margoliouth's explanation of the Madinites' joining him for that reason is wrong in both its premise and conclusion. In the Bu'âth war the Jews themselves were divided, Banû Qurayẓah supporting the 'Aws, and Banû al-Naḍîr and Banû Qaynuqâ' siding with the Khazraj. There was thus no question of the latter's thinking that the assistance of the Israelitish God was only on the side of their opponents and that that was the main reason for their victory. Secondly, if the Khazraj were at all so convinced of the efficacy of the Jewish God, they would have attempted to obtain His assistance by drawing closer to the Jews and by directly embracing Judaism instead of seeking to please the Jewish God through a non-Jewish Prophet. After all they were friendly with two of the three main Jewish tribes. Though the Jews did not attempt to convert the 'Aws and the Khazraj, as Margoliouth says, there was no bar to their becoming Jews. Thirdly, if military considerations and an intention to "continue the civil war" against their opponents had been the Khazrajites' reasons for joining the Prophet they would have taken care to see whether the Prophet was any viable military ally. They would have then noticed that he, far from being a strong ally, was himself seeking the support of the Madinites and that the Jewish God whose "emissary" he claimed to be had not as yet apparently enabled him to gain any visible victory over his Makkan opponents. Fourthly, as for the 'Aws, if they realized that their being allied with Banû Qurayẓah had obtained for them the special favour of the Jewish God, they would have been more steadfast in continuing that alliance. There was no reason for their apprehending the transfer of the assistance of that God to their rival tribe as long as they themselves continued to remain with their Jewish allies; the more so as there was as yet no sign of that favour of victory having been bestowed on the Prophet himself. In fact, neither military considerations and an intention to continue the civil war, nor a desire to obtain the Jewish God's special favour for their respective tribes actuated the Khazraj and the 'Aws to embrace Islam and join together to help the Prophet and his cause. Margoliouth's suggestion is

in fact a contradiction in itself. If the overriding consideration on both the 'Aws's and Khazraj's parts was to secure the favour of the Jewish God as against their respective rivals, they would not have just united themselves under a third party. The distinctive feature of the whole development was the abandonment of their respective allies by both the 'Aws and the Khazraj. Instead of really explaining it Margoliouth simply confuses the issue by saying that the "expedient which had originally been intended for the continuance of the civil war resulted in uniting the parties."

On his part Watt attempts a socio-economic explanation for the development. He says that the underlying cause of the frequent feuds at Madina was the pressure of increasing population on limited food-supplies with the consequent scramble for land, because Madina was primarily an agricultural community. Often the victors in the petty warfare occupied the lands of the vanquished. Madina was thus suffering from a similar disease as that of Makka, "the incompatibilty of nomadic standards and customs" with life in a settled community which requires a "single supreme authority to keep the peace between rival individuals and groups." But the social organization at Madina was the same as in the desert, being based on tribal solidarity and clan loyalties; and the desert principle of "keep what you have armed strength to keep" was the rule of conduct. Such a conduct, though suitable for flocks and herds over vast areas, was bound to lead to an unpleasant situation "within the narrow bounds of an oasis."[1] But whereas at Makka "commercial interests tended to draw different groups together and fostered a sense of unity of Quraysh", the agricultural conditions at Madina probably fostered fragmentation and a "larger number of subdivisions of the tribes", as evidenced by the mention of thrty-three clans of 'Aws and Khazraj taking part in the battle of Badr as against fifteen clans of the Quraysh. Apart from the relevance of that evidence, says Watt, Madina was much divided. Hence "the point which had been at the root of the opposition in Mecca — Muḥammad's position as Prophet and its political implications — was the very thing which offered the Madinans some hope of peace." "A Prophet, with authority resting not on blood but on religion, could stand above the warring groups and arbitrate between them." "The Anṣâr had thus a solid material reason for accepting Muḥammad as Prophet."[2] There was

1. Watt, *M. at M.,* 142-143.
2. *Ibid.,* 144.

also a religious root of the malaise at Madina, adds Watt, namely, a "hearty sickness with the endless feuds". To this problem Islam had a solution. "Its doctrine of the Last Day implied that the meaning of life is in the quality of the conduct of the individual." "Doubtless the Anṣâr had some realization of these implications", but "the majority of them presumably became Muslims primarily because they believed the doctrines" of Islam to be true and "that God had sent Muḥammad with a message to the Arabs."[1]

Allah had sent Muḥammad (ﷺ) not simply with a "message" but with a "text" as well, and not only "to the Arabs" but to mankind in general. Apart from what he conceives to be the religious aspect of the matter, though he hedges it with so many qualifying phrases as "doubtless", "presumably became Muslims", "primarily because", etc., Watt's other points are in fact an amplification of what the classical as well as subsequent writers speak about the direct and indirect effects of the battle of Bu'âth and the Madinites' need and desire for peace and stability through a neutral leadership. Even the point about the scramble for lands being at the root of the feuds have been mentioned by Watt's predecessors. Thus Margoliouth, for instance, says that "the acquisition of land or spoil" was at the root of the dissensions at Madina[2] and that the "real purpose of the Khazraj" on the eve of the Bu'âth war "was to force the Jews into quarrel with a view to obtaining their lands".[3] This latter statement of Margoliouth's is not of course a correct view of the cause of the Jews' involvement in the Bu'âth war, it being well-known that the Jewish tribes themselves were ranged on opposite sides in the conflict. Be that as it may, the theory of the growth of population leading to conflicts over the possession of lands is not quite applicable to the Madinan situation. For the conflicts over lands had been there since the beginning of the coexistence of the 'Aws, the Khazraj and the Jews at Madina. Also the sources do not indicate any perceptible growth of population there prior to the Bu'âth war. In fact no theory of growth of population is called for to explain the scarmble for water and oases in desert conditions where such scrambles are rather the order of the day.

As regards the question of the "incompatibility of nomadic standards with life in a settled community", it may be recalled that Watt speaks of

1. *Ibid.*
2. Margoliouth, *op.cit.,* 192.
3. *Ibid.,* 194.

more or less the same thing in connection with the Makkan background of the rise of Islam. In fact he admits here that Madina was suffering from a similar disease as that at Makka. But his statement about the peculiartities of the two places is a vague generalization. It was not commercial interests that fostered unity and drew the different groups together at Makka to evolve "a single supreme authority to keep the peace between the rival individuals and groups" there. The civil government there was rather a heritage of the Quraysh from their common ancestry. It was evolved by Quṣayy and developed by Hâshim; and the civil functions were subsequently divided among the clans. The inappropriateness of Watt's analysis is evident from the fact that earlier he speaks of the growth of commercialism and "individualism" as being responsible for the division of the Quraysh clans into two rival groups; and now he adduces the same phenomenon of commercialism to suggest the growlth of greater unity among them and their evolving an administrative mechanism suitable for settled conditions. The fact is that neither his earlier nor his present generalization is correct.

As regards the supposed "larger number of subdivisions of the tribes" at Madina due to fragmentation of lands fostered by agricultural conditions, Watt himself is not quite sure about the relevance of the "evidence" on this point. Apart from that, it must also be borne in mind that the known conflicts at Madina, particularly the Bu'âth war, were not between the "subdivisions of the tribes", whatever might be their extent and causes, but between the tribes as such, including the Jewish tribes. And so far as the question of the supposed incompatibility of nomadic institutions with settled conditions is concerned, it needs also to be emphasized that neither the Jews, nor the 'Aws and the Khazraj had lately emerged from nomadic states to a settled condition. They had been settled at Madina for at least a couple of centuries prior to the Bu'âth war. Yet, not to speak of the 'Aws and the Khazraj, even the Jews, notwithstanding their better education and being in possession of a revealed Book, do not appear to have worked out a civil system going beyond nomadic standards and in which the 'Aws and the Khazraj could participate or which they could imitate. Thus neither the continuance of nomadic concepts and institutions, nor the absence of commercilaism, nor even the prevalence of agriculatural conditions would adequately account for the greater disunity of the population at Madina. The greater disunity there appears to be due primarily to the greater heterogeneity of its population.

The 'Aws and the Khazraj's acceptance of Islam and of the Prophet had three important implications. It meant, in the first instance, their realization of the truth of the doctrines of Islam and their preference for it to Judaism with which they had been in daily contact for decades. Secondly, it meant that the 'Aws and the Khazraj buried their dead past of enmity and rivalry and came forward to live a life of peace and amity under a new system of faith and conduct. Thirdly, it meant that both the 'Aws and the Khazraj turned away from their respective allies of the Jews. Indeed this abandonment of the Jews by both the 'Aws and the Khazraj and their emancipating themselves from the influence of the former is the most remarkable aspect in the whole development. The devastating effects of the Bu'âth war and the consequent desire for peace and unity through a new and neutral leadership of course weighed with the 'Aws and the Khazraj in their welcoming the Prophet amidst them. But for a proper understanding of the development it is necessary also to seek an explanation of their revulsion against their immediate neighbours and erstwhile allies.

One main reason for this revulsion was that the Jews, having capital, exploited the 'Aws and the Khazraj through an extensive and extortionate system of money-lending which aggravated their poverty and swelled the wealth of their creditors. To maintain this system of exploitation the Jews often played the one tribe against the other which was one of the main reasons for their perennial quarrels and conflicts. The Bu'âth war, in which the Jews themselves were involved, did not prove so disastorus for them as for the 'Aws and the Khazraj. And although the 'Aws were nominally victorious, the real victors were their Jewish allies, and they did not make any secret of it. Indeed, in "following up the victory and exacting full vengeance", to use Margoliouth's words, "the Jews were not restrained by the usages which the Arabs respected." It was therefore only natural that the 'Aws quickly realized that in fighting and exhausting themselves for defeating the Khazraj they had fought really for the victory of the Jews. The defeated and humiliated Khazraj similarly realized that it was not really the 'Aws but the Jews who had wrought havoc on them. The two sides thus quickly realized their mistakes, drew nearer and became desirous for a lasting peace and unity. It should be noted that some form of unity between the two tribes preceded rather than followed the coming of the Prophet to Madina. In fact they had forged a basic unity between them before they pledged their support for the Prophet and invited him to come to their place.

The Bu'âth war and the role of the Jews in it as also previously to it urged the two hitherto hostile tribes towards a new life of peace and amity. Islam and the Prophet provided this new life and the much needed neutral leadership. If any material reason for the success of Islam in Madina is to be sought, it should be sought in the relationship between the Madinite Jews and their exploited neighbours of the 'Aws and the Khazraj, and not in the supposed growth of population there nor in the incompatibility of the so-called nomadic institutions with the settled conditions, that were in any case common to both Makka and Madina. Truly did 'Â'ishah (r.a.) remark that through the Bu'âth war Allah indirectly prepared Madina for its acceptance of Islam and the Prophet.

IV. REGARDING THE MANOEUVRES OF THE QURAYSH

It has been seen that the orientalists attempt to belittle the hostility of the Quraysh and their persecution of the Muslims.[1] In consonance with the same attitude the manoeuvres of the Quraysh on the eve of the migration also are defended and belittled. Thus William Muir characterizes the conclusion of the Second 'Aqabah Pledge as "an unwarranted interference" by the Madinites "in the domestic affairs of Mecca" and calls it "virtually a hostile movement".[2] He then says that when the Quraysh leaders came to know of this development they "renewed their persecution; and wherever they had the power, sought either to force the confessors to recant, or by confinement prevent their escape."[3] Having said so and having also cited Al-Ṭabarî who speaks of two peak periods of persecution, one preceding the migration to Abyssinia and the other following the Second 'Aqabah Pledge he says: "There is reason, however, to suspect that, had the persecution been as bad as is spoken of, we should have had more frequent notices of it. Yet, excepting the imprisonment or surveillance of a few waveres, we have no detail of any injuries or sufferings inflicted on this occasion by the Coreish."[4]

The statement that "we have no detail of any injuries or sufferings inflicted on this occasion" excepting "the imprisonment or surveillance of a few waverers" is both incorrect and misleading. The sufferings inflicted on 'Umm Salamah and those on 'Ayyâsh ibn 'Abî Rabî'ah and Hishâm ibn al-

1. *Supra,* pp. 747-756.
2. Muir, *op.cit.,* 127.
3. *Ibid.,* 128.
4. *Ibid.,* n.1.

'Âṣ ibn Wâ'il, besides their imprisonment in chains for long periods, are well-known. Even if no other detail is available, the imprisonment and confinement of individuals are in themselves no negligible persecution. And if, as Muir admits, the Quraysh attempted, "wherever they had the power", to force "the confessors to recant", the amount of force applied to secure renunciation of the faith could not conceivably have been only slight. In fact Muir virtually contradicts himself in the very succeeding page of his work where he states: "Persecution and artifice caused a few to fall away from the faith."[1] He cites in this connection the cases of 'Ayyâsh and Hishâm who are stated to have "relapsed for a time into idolatry".[2] They were indeed very badly persecuted and kept imprisoned for a long period till they succeeded in escaping and joining their brethren at Madina. Muir is very wrong in stating that they relapsed into idolatry. The report of course speaks of their being jeopardized (افتتن); but this expression here indicates rather the severity of the persecution inflicted on them than their having relapsed into idolatry. Had they really recanted and renounced Islam, they would not have been kept imprisoned till their rescue, nor would the Prophet have prayed for their freedom from their Quraysh captors, as by authentic reports he did for a long time till they succeeded in rejoining the Muslims at Madina.[3] Muir is also grossly mistaken in stating that 'Ayyâsh was 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb's (r.a.) brother.[4]

More blatantly apologetic for the Quraysh leaders is Muir's treatment of their conspiracy to kill the Prophet on the eve of his migration to Madina. Muir takes the facts mentioned in the report on this affair given in Ibn Isḥâq's and other works about the Quraysh leaders' secret meeting and their considering the proposals either to imprison the Prophet or to expel him or to kill him and then states: "At last they resolved that a deputation should proceed to the house of Mahomet."[5] The report, after mentioning the above mentioned proposals, also mentions very clearly that they ultimately decided on killing the Prophet and selected a band of assassins who lay in wait at night outside the Prophet's house to carry out their design as soon as he came out but he gave them a slip. Muir twists this fact and describes the

1. *Ibid.*, 129.
2. *Ibid.*, 129-130.
3. See *Bukhârî*, no. 4560.
4. Muir, *op.cit.*, 129.
5. *Ibid.*, 132.

Quraysh's sending the band of assassins as their having decided "that a deputation should proceed to the house" of the Prophet. But he virtually betrays an admission of the untenability of his ill-conceived apology by saying immediately after that statement: "What was the decision as to the future course of action, what the object even of the present deputation, it is impossible amid the marvel of traditions to conclude. There is little reason to believe that it was assassination, although we are told that such was determined upon at the instigation of Abu Jahl..."[1] One may only ask, if it is impossible to "conclude" what decision was taken in the meeting, how could it be so categorically stated that at "last they resolved that a deputation should proceed to the house of Maḥomet"? Again, if "the object even of the present deputation" is not known, how could it be suggested that the group going there was a "deputation" and that its object was peaceful, notwithstanding the fact that the leaders had seriously and secretly deliberated upon the extreme measures of imprisoning, expelling or killing the Prophet, none of which could be accomplished without the use of force and by peaceful means? Did the alleged "deputation" go to the Prophet's house at night simply to ask him to leave the town peacefully or to come forward willingly and submit himself to imprisonment?.

As an excuse for his disbelieving that it was assassination that was resolved upon in that meeting Muir says that the Prophet "himself" refers to the designs of his enemies in the Qur'ân in "indecisive terms" and quotes in his (Muir's) own translation the Qur'ânic passage 8:30 which speaks of the unbelievers' plotting to imprison or to kill or to expel the Prophet. Had "assassination been the sentence, and its immediate execution ordered by the council", concludes Muir, "Mahomet would not have been slow to indicate the fact in clearer language than these alternative expressions."[2]

Muir's implication here that the Qur'ân is the Prophet's own composition must at once be contradicted. But apart from that the inference from the passage in question is wrong. The passage speaks not "indecisively" but very decisively and clearly of the serious and extreme measures the unbelievers "plotted" (مكروا) to take against the Prophet. And even if it does not specifically mention the final decision of the Quraysh leaders it cannot be argued that the passage proves that no decision was made by them regarding the

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*, 133.

Prophet. In fact the purpose of the passage is not to give a full account of the meeting of the Quraysh leaders but to emphasize how Allah helped and saved the Prophet against all the deadly attempts of his enemies. The report which gives an account of the unbelievers' meeting is thus not at variance with the Qur'ânic passage. They each supplement and complement the other. The passage should be interpreted in conjunction with the report. Instead of doing so Muir takes the report in isolation and twists it; then he takes the Qur'ânic passage in isolation and also twits its implication to find support for his unreasonable and self-contradictory statements that it is imposiible amid the marvel of traditions to make out what decision was made at the Quraysh council and that they at "last resolved that a deputation should proceed to the house of Mahomet."

The unreasonableness of this suggestion is further betrayed by Muir in his immediately succeeding paragraph which he starts by saying: "Whatever the object of the visit, Mahomet received previous notice of it, and anticipated the danger by stealing away from his house." Muir further says that the Prophet left in his bed 'Alî to allay "the suspicions of neighbours", went straightway to 'Abû Bakr's house and "matured the plan for immediate flight", etc.[1] Now, one may only ask, if the Quraysh did not mean any harm and if the object of the alleged deputation was only peaceful, why should the Prophet, receiving previous notice of it, anticipate "the danger by stealing away from his house"? Muir here indirectly admits that the assassins came to the Prophet's house at night by mentioning the fact of 'Alî being left in the Prophet's mantle and bed. Muir also gives another twist to the fact when he says that the measure was intended to allay the "suspicions of neighbours". It was not to allay the "suspicions of neighbours" but to dupe the assassins that the step was taken. For the same purpose of maintaining his apology for the Quraysh leaders Muir omits mentioning their having declared a prize of one hundred camels for the head each of the Prophet and 'Abû Bakr and skips over the episode by stating a little later that when the Quraysh leaders came to know of the Prophet's escape, "they sent scouts in all directions with a view to gaining a clue to the track and destination of the Prophet, if not with less innocent instructions."[2] It may once again be pointed out that had the Quraysh leaders not decided on any specific action regarding the Prophet, they would rather have felt relief at his departure and would not

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*, 136.

have taken the trouble to send scouts to track him out; for the fact of his "destination" being Madina was very much known to them.

In line with the same apology for the Quraysh leaders Muir twists also the incident of Surâqah, whom he describes as "one of the mounted scouts returning from his search", and states that he, "seeing that he had small chance single-handed against his four opponents, offered no opposition, but on the contrary pledged his word that, if permitted to depart in peace, he would not reveal that he had met them."[1] It may only be pointed out that Surâqah was not simply "one of the scouts returning from his search" but one who, lured by the prize declared by the Quraysh on the Prophet's head, had gone on his mission to kill the Prophet and thereby secure the prize. If Surâqah's mission was peaceful, he had no reason to suppose that the Prophet and his companions were his "opponents", nor to think that he had "small chance single-handed" against them. For neither did the Prophet and his companions turn against anyone whom they chanced to come across on the way, nor did Surâqah go there to fight a pitched battle with the Prophet and his companions. He had gone there well armed and confident to shoot down his object from a comfortable distance. He came back in peace not because he saw little chance of success against the four but because of the other reasons which he himself describes in the report regarding the episode.[2] He sought permission to leave in peace and undertook not to divulge that he had met them not because the Prophet and his followers had attacked and forced him to submit but because he had been miraculously incapacitated as he himself describes. In fact, through his laboured apology for the Quraysh leaders Muir only admits indirectly that Surâqah had gone on his mission to kill or capture the Prophet as the Quraysh leaders desired.

Muir is also virtually contradicted by Margoliouth who, in spite of his obvious sympathy for the Quraysh leaders and antipathy to the Prophet, admits the truth of the assassination attempt. Margoliouth says that the "respectable and good-natured" Quraysh leaders had not as yet been "hard on Mohammed's eccentricity",[3] but when they saw that "the defence of the madman" was taken over by "a guard of followers, belonging to a different city and different tribes", they decided on killing him.[4] In a rather regretful

1. *Ibid.,* 137-138.
2. See *supra,* pp. 881-882.
3. Margoliouth, *op.cit.,* 183.
4. *Ibid.,* 207.

tone Margoliouth observes that Arabia "would have remained pagan" had there been a resolute man in Makka to "strike a blow" and be ready to "accept responsibility for acting". Instead, the Quraysh leaders finally decided that "Mohammed should be assassinated, every tribe in Mecca sending a representative to take part in the murder." When, however, "the trembling conspirators reached his home, to execute their melodrama as he rose from sleep, he was not there."[1] A little later on Margoliouth again confirms the assassination attempt when he observes, rather incorrectly, that even after the Prophet's arrival at Madina, the "terrors of the attempted assassination and of the days and nights in the Cave were still on him."[2] Margoliouth's venom against the Prophet is, however, obvious through the expression "madman" used with regard to him.

Like both Muir and Margoliouth Watt also minimizes the extent of the Quraysh's persecution of the Muslims on the eve of their migration. In this connection he quotes in his own translation 'Urwah's letter given in Al-Ṭabarî and also in Ibn Hishâm and to which Muir refers by saying that Al-Ṭabarî mentions two peak periods of persecution.[3] Watt suggests that since the family of Al-Zubayr was hostile to the 'Umayyads, 'Urwah would therefore be inclined to exaggerate the persecution, "seeing that the clan of Umayyah were deeply involved in the opposition to Muḥammad."[4] The suggestion is far-fetched; for no particular allusion is made in the report to the 'Umayyads. Also, if it was generally known that the 'Umayyads were "deeply involved in the opposition" to the Prophet, there was no need at 'Urwah's time to emphasize that the persecution was severe only at two specific periods. The suggestion is also somewhat inconsistent with Watt's earlier use of another report by 'Urwah to trace the beginning of opposition to the Prophet. It may be recalled that on the basis of 'Urwah's statement in that report that some propertied Quraysh people coming from Ṭâ'if started the opposition to the Prophet, Watt suggests that some Quraysh people having special commercial interests in Ṭâ'if started the opposition.[5] Had 'Urwah had any ulterior motive against the 'Umayyads he would have so mani-

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*, 214.
3. Watt, *M. at. M.*, 145-146.
4. *Ibid.*, 146.
5. *Supra*, pp. 717-718, 726, 735-736.

pulated his report as to suggest in the first instance that they were responsible for starting the opposition against the Prophet.

With regard to the assassination attempt, however, Watt adopts in effect mainly Muir's views and partly those of Margoliouth. Thus, after relating the Quraysh leaders' secret conference and their decision to kill the Prophet jointly, the representatives of all the clans taking part in the murder, Watt says that though there is no reason for denying that some such meeting took place and that the Quraysh leaders "realized that Muḥammad was planning hostile activities against them", it is clear "from subsequent events" that "there was no resolute attempt to kill" the Prophet and that "there was less agreement at the meeting than the sources assert. The imminence of danger, however, perhaps precipitated Muḥammad's departure."[1]

In saying that "there was less agreement at the meeting than the sources assert" and that nonetheless the "imminence of danger....perthaps precipitated Muḥammad's departure" Watt clearly echoes Muir's views and the same objection apply to this statement as well. Similarly in saying that the Quraysh realized that "Muḥammad was planning hostile activities against them" Watt adopts Muir's view that the conclusion of the Second 'Aqabah Pledge was an "unwarranted interference" in the internal affairs of Makka. It is also a reflection of Margoliouth's view that when "Mohammed's successful diplomacy threatened to wreck the independence of their city", the Quraysh "adopted forcible measures".[2] Also the saying that "subsequent events" show that "there was no resolute attempt to kill Muḥammad" savours of Margoliouth's view that the Quraysh only weakly and unsuccessfully planned to kill the Prophet. If by "subsequent events" it is meant that the Prophet was not in fact killed and he succeeded in escaping, then it is to be noted that as persecution falling short of putting the victim to death is not necessarily mild[3], similarly an assassination attempt is not irresolute simply because the intended victim succeeded in escaping the attempt.

V. ON THE MANNER OF THE PROPHET'S MIGARTION

Regarding the manner of the Prophet's migartion all the three scholars concentrate their attention on the question why the Prophet first allowed his followers to migrate to Madina and he himself delayed going there till

1. *Ibid.*, 150.
2. Margoliouth, *op.cit.*, 183.
3. See *supra*, 750-751.

almost all the Makkan Muslims had reached there. They suggest a number of reasons in reply to this question. Muir says that perhaps the Prophet was waiting to receive "assurance" from Madina that the arrangements for his reception there "were secure" and that his adherents there were both ready and able to "execute their engagement for his defence." He might even have been actuated by "the more generous desire to see all his followers safely away" before he himself left Makka; or he might "even be waiting with the vague surmise that divine retribution ... was about to descend on the unbelieving city."[1] Muir adds that the Quraysh, expecting the Prophet to migrate with his people, "were perplexed" at this "strange procedure".[2]

Echoing Muir's first suggestion in a large measure Margoliouth says that the Prophet delayed his departure for Madina because he intended to test the faith of the people of Madina and to be sure, before leaving his "stronghold", that the Madinites welcomed "those hungry mouths" from Makka. Also, adds Margoliouth, if the people of Madina proved fickle, the refugees "would form a bodyguard of desperate men of whose loyalty" the Prophet "could be absolutely sure."[3] And just as Margoliouth takes one of Muir's suggestions and adds a new one, similarly Watt reiterates Margoliouth's last mentioned suggestion and adds to it a new one. Watt says that the Prophet waited at Makka until the majority of his followers reached Madina "probably to ensure that waverers did not abandon the enterprise" and that he wanted to make it certain "that he would be in a strong and independent position when he reached Madina and would not have to rely solely on the support of the Madinan Muslims."[4] The last part of the statement is in essence the same as Margoliouth's suggestion that in case the Madinites proved fickle, the refugees would form a solid core of bodyguards on whose loyalty the Prophet could rely. Watt cites in support of his statement Leo Caetani's *Annali dell'Islam*, I, 365. It appears that both Margoliouth and Caetani independently made the same suggestion, for their works were published in the same year (1905).

But let us consider the suggestions. As regards the Caetani-Margoliouth-Watt surmise that the Prophet wanted to be sure at least of the support of the

1. Muir, *op.cit.,* 131.
2. *Ibid.,* 132.
3. Margoliouth, *op.cit.,* 206.
4. Watt, *M. at M.,* 150.

"refugees" in case the Madinites proved "fickle", it is simply beside the point and does in no way explain the procedure of the followers' first going to Madina before the Prophet went there; for he could rely on the support on the "refugees" in either case, whether they preceded him or accompanied him to that place. The other surmises, namely, (a) that the Prophet probably wanted to test the faith of the Madinites, or (b) that he wanted to receive assurance that the arrangements for his reception there were "secure", or (c) that he wanted to be sure whether his Madinite adherents were able and ready to "execute their engagement for his defence" or (d) that he wanted to see whether they were willing to feed the "hungry mouths" from Makka — all these do not stand to reason and the facts. All the four surmises are in fact different formulations of the first one, namely, to test the faith of the Madinites. But no real test of that could have been made unless the Prophet himself went there. If the Madinites contemplated bad faith, they would surely have maintained a show of good faith till the Prophet arrived there and then to let him down along with his followers. No earthly prudence and precaution could have prevented their doing so. Secondly, the negotiations with Madina were made over a period of at least two years during which the faith and sincerity of the Madinites had become quite clear to the Prophet. Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr stayed with them for about a year to teach the Qur'ân and to preach Islam among their people. Obviously he kept the Prophet well informed of his prospects and the prospects of Islam at Madina. More importantly, after the Second Pledge of 'Aqabah, some Madinite Muslims came over to Makka to coordinate the process of the migration. In view of all these it is simply idle to think that the Prophet still waited to have further proof of the good faith of the Madinites. Thirdly, if it was at all intended to test their sincerity, that could have been done more easily and more sensibly by sending a sizeable group of emigrants there instead of sending almost the whole body of them. Finally, if the Prophet had been actuated by the considerations suggested, he would not have overlooked the fact that the procedure he adopted left him almost alone in the midst of his enemies while there was the further risk of his followers growing lukewarm in their loyalty or even turning against him in case the Madinites were found wanting in their support and cooperation. The surmises made by the orientalists thus do not reasonably explain the procedure adopted by the Prophet.

As regards Muir's surmise that the Prophet might even be waiting to see divine retribution befalling Makka, it is totally unteble. There is no indica-

tion in the sources that the Prophet ever expected that divine retribution was about to befall Makka. Had he been under such an impression he would have rather hastened to leave it, taking his followers with him. Equally untenable is Watt's suggestion that the Prophet probably waited to ensure that waverers did not "abandon the enterprise". There is no instance of the Prophet's prevailing upon any waverer as such to persevere in the so-called "enterprise". Watt's characterization of the migration as "the enterprise" is indeed symptomatic only of his and also Muir's and Margoliouth's view that by the conclusion of the Second Pledge of ʻAqabah and the consequent migration to Madina the Prophet was planning "hostile activities" against the Quraysh. This was of course the view of the Prophet's Quraysh opponents; and hostilities did indeed subsequently break out between the two sides. Truly speaking, those subsequent developments were only a coninuation and escalation by the Quraysh themselves of their earlier hostilities that drove the Prophet and the Muslims from their homes and forced them to seek refuge in another and a considerably distant town. So far as the Second Pledge of ʻAqabah and the migration are concerned, they were to all intents and purposes defensive steps. The Prophet and the Muslims left their hearths and homes for conscience's sake. There was as yet no plan to wage any sort of armed counterattack against the Quraysh oppressors. True, the Madinites, rightly apprehending the hostilities of the already hostile and violent Quraysh, pledged themselves to fight for the defence of the Prophet and Islam. Indeed their giving shelter to the Prophet and the Muslims against the persecution and enmity of the Quraysh in itself meant the undertaking of such a responsibility. The Prophet had not yet received divine permission to take up arms and fight for the cause; nor did he as yet permit his followers to do so. In fact the defensive nature of the migration and the absence of permission to engage in an armed conflict account for what Muir calls the Prophet's "strange" procedure. He did indeed exhibit uncommon generosity in not migrating first and thus leaving his followers behind in the midst of enemies; but he could as well have migrated accompanied by his followers. He did not do so because in that case the Quraysh were sure to come in a body to oppose them, leading inevitably to an armed conflict for which the Prophet had not as yet received divine permission. For the same reason he did not ask or encourage any contingent of Madinan Muslims to come to or near Makka to escort him to their city, although they were willing and ready to do so. For, that procedure would likewise have elicited hostile action by the

Quraysh. Under the circumstances and in accordance with divine instructions he asked his followers to proceed to Madina and himself stayed behind waiting for Allah's specific permission for him to leave and disregarding all the risks it involved. And when he received the instructions for himself to leave, he did so, with full confidence in Divine help amidst all the humanly conceivable risks and hazards, and proceeded unarmed and unaccompanied by any contingent of bodyguards. The so-called "strange procedure" was part of the Divine plan, not the product of what the orientalists surmise determined the Prophet's procedure.

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The Ministry of Islamic Affairs,
Endowments, Da'wah and Guidance
of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
which supervises King Fahd Complex For The
Printing of The Holy Qur'an, Madinah Munawwarah
while expressing its great pleasure at the publication
by the Complex in collaboration with IslamicUniversity
of Madinah Munawwarah, of this edition of
Sîrat al-Nabî ﷺ and the Orientalists (Makkan Period)
prays to Allah to make it useful, and to grant
the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques
King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Azîz Âl Sa'ûd the best of
rewards for his ceaseless efforts to disseminate the
Noble Book of Allah, and the Sunnah and Sîrah of
His Messenger ﷺ.
And Allah is the Bestower of guidance.

إنّ وزارة الشؤون الإسلاميّة والأوقاف والدّعوة والإرشاد

في المملكة العربيّة السّعوديّة

المشرفة على مجمّع الملك فهد

لطباعة المصحف الشّريف في المدينة المنوّرة

إذ يسرّها أن يصدر المجمّع بالتّعاون مع

الجامعة الإسلاميّة بالمدينة المنوّرة هذه الطبعة

من كتاب

سيرة النّبيّ ﷺ والمستشرقون (العهد المكّي)

تسأل الله أن ينفع به، وأن يجزي

خادم الحرمين الشّريفين الملك فهد بن عبد العزيز آل سعود

أحسن الجزاء على جهوده العظيمة في نشر كتاب الله الكريم

وسنّة وسيرة رسوله الأمين صلّى الله عليه وسلّم

والله وليّ التّوفيق